Critical Romani Studies Book Series

Romani Liberation

A Northern Perspective on Emancipatory Struggles and Progress

Jan Selling

CEU PRESS

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Critical ROMANI Studies Book Series

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Romani Liberation

A Northern Perspective on Emancipatory Struggles and Progress

Jan Selling

With a Foreword by Nicoleta Bitu and
Afterwords by Soraya Post and Hans Caldaras

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Foreword

I have known Jan Selling for many years but came closer to his work while presiding on the board of the Roma Archive, an experience I value greatly. Getting to know him better, both personally and later through his work, while at the same time having discussions within the framework of the Roma Archive, I came to understand his position better. He is one of those academics with a high capacity of self-reflection on his position, not only as a researcher but also as a white, middle-class male. We sometimes used to joke about this mixture of privileges while I was listing my intersectional dis-privileges. Knowing his wife, Solvor, longer than him, I understood why they came together and what brought and has kept them together: humanism and self-reflection on power, being some of the most wonderful aspects of their relationship.

So, the lines I write here are more about my emotions, which have developed in 30 years of activism a conscience for the recognition and acceptance of what and how we feel when we read, talk, and revendicate our history. This book brought me emotions of all kinds, including anger and sadness. As a fan of Papusza, the Polish Romani poet, I am including here some of her verses from the poem "Tears of Blood," the story of the Holocaust, so meaningful for the work Jan has done in this book:

.... All the birds
are praying for our children,
so the evil people, vipers, will not kill them.
Ah, fate!
My unlucky luck!

Snow fell as thick as leaves,
barred our way,

such heavy snow, it buried the cartwheels.
One had to trample a track,
push the carts behind the horses.

How many miseries and hungers!
How many sorrows and roads!
How many sharp stones pierced our feet!
How many bullets flew by our ears! [1]

Later, we drew closer during all the heated public debates regarding the writings of another generation of non-Romani researchers, writings which across the years, with the cooperation of Romani scholars, have contributed to the power of non-Roma in academic spheres. These kinds of academic and power attitudes towards Roma are the best expressed in the work of the Gypsy Lore Society. This power has defined who we are, what we should wear, how we should behave, and what the policies of the state should be for our "integration" and "civilization," because we, Roma, "poor us," are unable to say a word. Their colonial attitude toward Roma, unfortunately, still exists even today.

I, as a Romani civil rights activist, feminist, and academic, have at the same time faced the criticisms of the worlds surrounding these roles, faced with the criticism of being either a nationalist, a de-constructivist, or not being objective enough to be a real researcher, and I could go on and on with this. In reading this book, we may feel it become very personal, in a strange way. Even though I have read, used, and practiced strategic essentializing, and have contributed to the politics of memorialization and the pioneering of critical discourse studies, the lines in this book make me understand where I am and why: a Romani woman living in this century who identifies with her ancestors and their struggles. It is like a trip through my own history.

One of the aspects of my discourse is the statement that we are a people without power, who have not practiced the institutions of power, and have only recently through our own self-organization come to learn some of this. However, even though lacking access to institutionalized power, we have achieved so much! This book is like a record of the struggles for emancipation, intellectual autonomy, and decolonialization. One thought haunted me while

1 Translated from the Polish by Yala Korwin. https://balticworlds.com/papusza/.

reading the chapters on history: how Europe calls itself a modern, civilized and superior society, while having cultivated antigypsyism for centuries to the point that it has become the most accepted form of racism.

Dr Nicoleta Bitu,

Romani feminist activist

Acknowledgement

This book is largely the fruit of my labor at Södertörn University, where I since 2016 have worked to develop Romani studies and create the conditions to introduce a Romani mother tongue teacher program. In 2021 we reached the significant step of establishing a department with a declared rights-based approach, which since 2022 is named Department of Critical Romani Studies. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues and students who encouraged me along the way and shared their knowledge as well as the members of our newly started Critical Romani studies and antigypsyism research colloquium for PhD candidates.

This book is also largely the fruit of my research and didactic work for the international Romani knowledge platform RomArchive (Digital Archive of the Roma). This work has led to a robust exchange of ideas and materials with the scholars Thomas Acton, Angéla Kóczé, Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Adrian Marsh, Erika Thurner, Daniela Gress, Marko Stenroos, and Vidar Fagerheim Kalsås as well as with the Nordic advisors Maria Rosvoll, Malte Gasche, Miika Tervonen, Risto Blomster, Hans Caldaras, Britt-Inger Lundqvist and Fred Taikon. I would especially like to thank Nicoleta Bitu, Soraya Post, and Hans Caldaras, who inspired me in so many ways and were kind enough to share their thoughts by writing the foreword and the afterwords for this book.

I owe gratitude also to Ian Hancock, Margareta Matache, Dezső Máté, Claudia Lenz, Sunita Memetovic, Bagir Kwiek, Linda Lundqvist and Charles Westin, who in different ways have supported my undertaking. I would like to thank the European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network (ERGO), European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM), Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma/Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen, Chad Wyatt, Jean-Pierre Liégois, Erika Thurner, Angelica Ström, Anna and Birgitta Langhammer, Fred Taikon, *É Romani Glinda*, Vibeke Løkkeberg, Paul Rimmerfors, Rosario Ali Taikon,

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Thank you to Molly and my family, not least to my wife Solvor, who not only gave me the space to realize this book, but also generously shared her knowledge and sense for epistemic justice.

The book's production costs have been co-funded by Södertörn University.

It is my sincere hope that this book will be useful in the quest for Romani liberation.

Stockholm, January 2022
Jan Selling

Introduction

Roma is an umbrella term for groups of people who share a common ancestry and language. But only to a certain extent. And not all groups normally included in this umbrella-term self-identify as Roma. With this in mind, I will initially use this umbrella term, as do most Roma activists and government authorities in Sweden and across the globe. As I proceed, I will be more differentiated with the terms I use when referring to certain peoples.

This is a book about Roma written by a non-Romani person. I have done a great deal of reflection about what this positionality means.[1] I have therefore taken extra care to conduct my research in dialogue with the Roma I have come into contact with during my work as a teacher, researcher, and academic activist in Romani studies since 2010. At the same time, this is a book with implications that extend beyond the Roma, as it deals with collective human problems such as liberation and social justice in the spirit of emancipatory research.

The terms emancipation and liberation are often considered synonymous. However, while there is overlap between the terms, they are not exactly interchangeable. In Marxist theory, the term-couple is sometimes called political and human emancipation. I have chosen to use both terms here because of their distinct associations. The term emancipation is often used in its most literal sense: that a certain group (for emancipation is always collective) is given the same legal and social rights as others in a society. A common understanding of the notion emphasizes emancipation as something that is given—a group is given rights thanks to the actions of other groups or structural changes in society. This has often been the case in some of the defining moments in Roma history I discuss here, such as the liberation from 500 years of slavery in Southeast Europe. However, emancipation can also be conceived of as the process and effort through which a group achieves rights. For the purposes of this book,

1 For an analysis on the issues from a Romani perspective, see Máté, *Generational Changes*.

the latter perspective is more useful, and the very struggle to achieve civil and social justice can be seen as emancipation. Similarly, what is meant by the term emancipatory research is that it ultimately aims to root out oppression and contribute to change, whether that is subordination due to class, ethnicity, skin color, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Liberation has a broader meaning and includes an existential dimension whereby humans realize their full potential through liberation. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre described emancipation as a necessary step towards liberation.[2] The concept of liberation is also a central component of the pedagogical tradition linked to Paulo Freire. According to Freire, awareness-raising is the first step in any group's struggle to achieve social justice.[3] He proceeded from the assumption that unjust hierarchies of power are accepted due to perceptions and norms imprinted in both oppressors and the oppressed through the church, school, mass media and other areas of culture. This is what Antonio Gramsci called cultural hegemony.[4] Freire ultimately inspired a religious movement among a number of South American Catholic priests in the 1960s that came to be known as liberation theology. The priests applied their religious faith to take an active role in social change and human liberation here on earth.[5]

The hegemony perspective is a central component of this book. Discourse is a second central concept, which I use to describe people's approaches to reality in their words and actions. My interpretation of hegemony thereby concerns the dominant discourse, the approach that is considered normal or natural. In my 2013 book, *Svensk antiziganism* (Swedish antigypsyism), I showed how the hegemony of antigypsyism developed and manifested itself in Sweden historically. Finally, I use the term "cultural memory" to describe a society's historical consciousness and collective identity. Cultural memory is always collective and can be seen as the dominant discourse in terms of historical consciousness and the identity shared within a certain group or in society at large. Who are we? Who are they? The collective memory exists in a perpetual state of change. It serves as the arena where cultural struggle plays out. Within the Roma collective, this may relate to the relationship with, and the sense of community shared with other groups. In the majority society, this may relate to the question who is to be included in notions of the national.

2 Lefebvre, *Marx sociologi,* chapter 5.
3 Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*
4 Gramsci, *En kollektiv intellektuell.*
5 Chasteen, *Latinamerikas historia,* chapter 9.

In applying this lens to Swedish culture, for example, one may ask: What is Swedishness? Has Swedishness become multicultural, or has it always been that way? We all constantly apply these mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion to the patchwork of collective identities we are part of. An individual person can be, for example, Roma, Swedish, a Stockholmer, Hammarby football supporter and a woman.

The history of antigypsyism (also known as antiziganism or anti-Roma racism) centers around the prejudices, fantasies, violence, oppression, and discriminatory practices of the majority society against people associated with the stereotype of "gypsies." In this book, I take the opposite perspective to the research I presented in 2013, and instead discuss Romani liberation and emancipation from a historical and international perspective.

State of the Art

In a 2018 essay, Romani author Ágnes Daróczi together with János Bársony invoke the Roma's right to their own history: a history indelibly marked by persecution, but also by coexistence, of everyday existence, of common people, heroes, and role models. The essay serves as a call to action to Roma and non-Roma alike.[6]

There is a rich literature on the Romani language and culture as well as an extensive body of research that examines the different aspects of Romani life in terms of social or educational conditions. Much of this has been characterized by biased, colonial or exotifying perspectives, which manifest "epistemic violence".[7] However, in recent years, emancipatory perspectives have also emerged. In my commentary on this literature in chapter 3, I note that Romani studies is in the process of being decolonized.

Yet, historians have thus far neglected themes concerning Romani political mobilization and emancipation, except as components of the bigger picture of historical antigypsyism,[8] or within biographical or autobiographical works. In Sweden, noteworthy works on this subject include the books of Katarina Taikon, Berith Kalander, Sofia Taikon, Lawen Mohtadi and Hans Caldaras,

6 Bársony and Daróczi, "Forbidden People."

7 Epistemic violence can be defined as an oppressive technology that excludes under-privileged groups from knowledge production and prevents them from making themselves heard, as well as the actual contributions of knowledge to violent societal domination. Brunner, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Violence."

8 See, e.g., Selling et al., *Antiziganism*; Achim, *Roma in Romanian History*.

and from Norway, Tore-Jarl Bielenberg.[9] The political struggle of Finnish Roma has been examined by Sarita Friman-Korpela and Marko Stenroos.[10] On the international level, existing research is dominated by the social sciences with short-term historical perspectives. The exceptions are the works of Thomas Acton, Ian Hancock, Yaron Matras and Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov.[11] An overview based on this research can be found online at the Council of Europe's *Factsheets on Roma History*.[12] At the same time, these researchers are actors sitting on different sides of an intense conflict over how Romani history is to be written, which is also a common thread throughout this book. Acton and Hancock have been accused of being activists rather than scientists, while Matras and Marushiakova and Popov have been portrayed as advocates of gypsylorism and colonial perspectives on Roma.

A major recurring issue is the view of Romani identity and Romani ethnicity. According to Norwegian historian Anne Minken, research has historically been based largely on essentialism, the idea that an ethnic group is defined based on characteristics that are considered to be more or less unchanging over time. In applying this approach, it follows that the researcher assumes the right to label and catalogue ethnic groups. Historically, essentialist Romani research has swung back and forth between an approach based on ethnographic (cultural) aspects and social criteria in an attempt to define who is a "Traveler," "Gypsy Traveler," "Gypsy," "Roma," "Tater," "Romani," or a subset of these categories.[13] Sociologist Mihai Surdu has concluded that the ambition to create an "objective," (i.e., positivist), classification of different groups of "Gypsies" was formative for the creation of the Gypsy Lore Society and that this "classical paradigm" has up to this day been dominant, though in later decades increasingly questioned.[14]

As I will show in this book, essentialist views of Romani people continue to prevail today and have always played an important role in shaping the policies of the majority society. The opposite of essentialism is an approach that posits

9 Taikon, *Zigenerska*; Taikon, *Zigenare är vi*; Kalander, *Sörj inte lidandet*; Lundgren and Taikon, *Sofia Z-4515*; Caldaras, *I betraktarens ögon*; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Mohtadi, *Katarina Taikon*; Bielenberg, *Romá/Sigöynere*.

10 Friman-Korpela, "Den finskromska politikens internationella förbindelser," 226–251; Stenroos, "Movement in Finland."

11 See, e.g., Acton "Transnational Movements of Roma; Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, 223–279; Marushiakova and Popov, *Roma Voices in History*; Marushiakova and Popov, "Nation Without a State?"

12 Wogg, Pawlata and Wiedenhofer, eds., "Institutionalisation and Emancipation." in *Factsheets on Roma History*, https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/roma-history-factsheets.

13 Minken, *Tatere i Norden,* 431.

14 Surdu, *Those Who Count,* 88–89.

identity and ethnicity as a dynamic process linked to cultural memories, a process in a state of perpetual transformation, shaped by human interaction and the course of history. In taking this anti-essentialist approach it follows that only an individual can decide how they are to be identified in relation to the group and that an individual can identify in myriad ways simultaneously. But this type of identification is not an arbitrary process. An individual's affiliation with a group may or may not be accepted.

However, essentialism is not always exclusively a colonial perspective adopted by outsiders. Not unlike the nationalists of the majority society, ethnic groups can choose to streamline cultural expressions and the depiction of their origins in order to clearly define who is included in the group. This approach, sometimes called "strategic essentialism" can be an effective political tool, as it creates a sense of cohesion within the group and identifies the group to the outside world as a force with the right to self-determination.[15] Romani nationalism is an issue that often appears in the historiography of Romani emancipation and liberation, though in the case of the Roma, this does not necessarily mean aspiring to secure a geographical homeland. However, this strategy is controversial, even among Romani activists.

Ethnologist Ioana Bunescu contends that Romani ethnopolitics tend to be closely linked to the everyday routines and practices of Roma—separatism and solidarity within the group—but de-emphasizes the perhaps equally dominant strategy of seeking interaction with and belonging in major society.[16] On the one hand, the shared identity that unites Romani people across national borders is perhaps the greatest resource for the Romani civil rights movement.[17] On the other hand, an overly narrow Romani identity can be seen as internalized gypsylorism. The British social work researcher, Brian Belton, identifies as "Gypsy," but believes that "The notion of a permanent and unchanging Gypsy identity is, as such, related much more to the thinking of the 'dark ages' than it is to post-enlightened thought; it is in fact regressive."[18] Another objection to strategic essentialism is that it can lead to divisions between different Romani groups. In addition, a certain balancing act is needed to combine the perspective of a "national minority," as in the name of the Central Council of

15 Ryder, *Sites of Resistance,* 125. The concept of "strategic essentialism" was established in 1985 by the Indian postcolonial, feminist philosopher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Grosz, "Criticism". Spivak would later warn that the term can easily be misused if it is only used as a descriptive theory rather than a temporary, liberating practice. Hjorth, *Förtvivlade läsningar*, 50–54.

16 Bunescu, *Roma in Europe*, 71.

17 McGarry, *Who Speaks for Roma?* 141.

18 Belton, "Knowing Gypsies," 42.

German Sinti and Roma (also, the term "Swedish Roma" is not exactly suitable, because it only applies to one of the Romani groups in Sweden) and the perspective "transnational minority," as in "Europe's largest ethnic minority," "World Romani Congress," and so forth. Political scientist Martin Kovats is among those who most strongly questioned Romani nationalism. According to Kovats, it is not a question of emancipatory ideology but of the manipulation of a vulnerable group by Romani elites.[19]

However, others argue that Romani ethnopolitical mobilization may very well cope with all these challenges. According to Ian Hancock, it is a matter of understanding history as the basis for a political community of interest that interconnects and respects cultural differences within the Romani collective.[20] British Romani theologian and artist Damian le Bas argued that Romani identity should not be defined according to cultural similarities, or having origins in India, but on the basis of the common experience of the diaspora.[21] Belgian political scientist Peter Vermeersch contends that the young, educated internet-savvy generation of Romani activists is successfully reshaping notions of what a Romani identity can be. He argues that, in this way, new political alliances have been formed, and activism has turned more towards the political sphere. He sees examples of this shift in the international youth network TernYpe and in the European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network (ERGO).[22]

Very little research has been done that compares the civil rights struggle of Romani and other groups. I will provide several examples in this book to demonstrate how the African-American civil rights movement has served as an inspiration for the Romani civil rights movement, but also to show that European Romani activism has had difficulty achieving the same type of impact thus far. An important study in this area is the comparison of the Roma rights and American civil rights struggle by Felix B. Chang and Sunnie T. Rucker-Chang in 2020. By comparing developments in post 1989 Eastern Europe with the US civil rights history of the 1950s and 1960s from a legalist perspective, they highlight one of the key aspects of this book: what factors make major society do something about the emancipation of minorities. Their conclusion is that things are only put in motion when there is a "convergence of interest."[23] In the 2017 volume *Realizing Roma Rights*, human rights

19 Kovats, "Politics of Roma Identity."
20 Hancock, *We Are the Romani People*, 273–279; Hancock, "Keynote," xxx.
21 Le Bas, "The Possible Implication."
22 Vermeersch, "Roma Mobilization and Participation," 211–212.
23 Chang and Rucker-Chang, *Roma Rights and Civil Rights*.

scholar Jacqueline Bhabha points to the African American civil rights veteran and lawyer Jack Greenberg who distilled the recipe for success in the struggle towards desegregation into three key items: legal struggle with support from fundamental rights documents, mass mobilization and strong leadership. According to Greenberg, the Romani activists in Europe have been effective on the first item, but the latter two have been missing.[24] The question is why.

Both within the research community and among activists, the explanation for this lack of success is often sought in Romani leadership, which has been characterized by elitism, but also in the fact that Romani too often lined up as "alibi Roma," who were asked to legitimize projects that were not in the interests of the larger group of Roma. As a result, Romani issues continue to be controlled by the majority society's consultants and "gypsy experts," albeit in a modern incarnation, while the Romani have been forced to navigate systems that have themselves been the cause of the problems.[25]

One of the most prominent voices in the movement, the philosopher Nicolae Gheorghe, highlighted the lack of attention to these two items. He argued, for example, that the EU's inclusion strategies for Romani were developed with only symbolic Roma participation and therefore could not be expected to represent Romani interests.[26] Inclusion risked becoming a new age of cultural assimilation in a neoliberal Europe. Bhabha draws attention to the fact that "much European Roma policy, within the European Commission, for example, has been prompted not by grassroots demands for justice or inclusion but by pressure from EU member states concerned about Roma migration."[27] Similarly, Polish activist and ethnologist Andrzej Mirga criticized *The Decade of Roma Inclusion*, which was established upon the initiative of the World Bank in collaboration with the Open Society Foundation and twelve states in Eastern Europe.[28] Yet another answer is given in a recent dissertation of social and cultural anthropologist Marko Stenroos. He argues that if policy recommendations are not grounded in profound analyses of antigypsyism, they make Roma responsible for their own subordination and the policies will inevitably fail.[29]

The rise of professionalized NGOs (non-governmental organizations) has also been the subject of criticism. On the one hand, they are called into ques-

24 Bhabha, "Realizing Roma Rights," 8.
25 Cemlyn, Ryder and Acton, eds., *Hearing the Voices*, 220–235; see also Kwiek, "Unintentional Exclusion."
26 Vermeersch, "Roma Mobilization and Participation," 204, note 17; Cemlyn, Ryder and Acton, eds., *Hearing the Voices*, 222.
27 Bhabha, "Realizing Roma Rights," 4.
28 Mirga, "Roma Policy in Europe."
29 Stenroos, *Social Orders*.

tion by authors like Marushiakova and Popov who use the derogatory term "Gypsy industry," to scornfully state that they are run by Roma "whose sole educational and professional qualification is the Roma origin (often contested by other Roma)" with the single purpose of attracting earmarked funds.[30] On the other hand, the NGOs have been criticized for being governed according to the views of the financiers, and as such, are tools for a kind of neoliberal colonialism. According to Nidhi Trehan, this agenda has led to symbolic victories for Romani rights, while at the same time, structural discrimination has continued to increase. Trehan's analysis paints a pessimistic picture, where Romani organizations cannot overcome the structural violence inherent in the economic system on their own. Trehan recommends long-term initiatives to strengthen autonomy locally through education, grassroots activism, and member-run local organizations.[31]

In his autoethnographic study, British sociologist Andrew Ryder discusses the recent Romani awakening, wherein the civil rights movement is attempting to take a new approach. Similar to Trehan, he highlights the structural antigypsyism, the racialization of poverty, which afflicted the Roma after the fall of Eastern European state socialism and the recent financial crises. The Roma have thus taken a double hit: socio-economic exclusion and they are targets of racist scapegoating. Despite this bleak depiction of the current state of affairs, Ryder sees signs of hope both in Romani grassroots activism, which often relates to concrete issues, and within academia, where critical Romani studies challenge exclusionary discourses and raise new questions for discussion. Ryder asserts that these new paths can have successful outcomes, especially if they open the door to alliances with other marginalized groups but emphasizes that it will require careful navigation to avoid familiar pitfalls such as elitism, symbolic politics, and the dominance of strategic essentialism.[32]

Research on antigypsyism has demonstrated the importance of addressing its historical roots, for understanding today's structural antigypsyism and the continued normalcy of antigypsy attitudes.[33] For example, a guiding principle behind the Swedish authority Forum for Living History's mission is for knowledge of history to contribute to a deeper understanding, thereby challenging scapegoating, stereotypes, and prejudices. Facts about the historical longue duree of Romani presence in European countries have been crucial for their

30 Marushiakova and Popov, "Nation Without a State."
31 Trehan, *Human Rights Entrepreneurship*.
32 Ryder, *Sites of Resistance*, 125.
33 SOU 2010:55; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Wippermann, "Longue Durée of Antiziganism."

recognition as national minorities. Awareness of history is also a crucial component of the cultural memory for society as a whole, as well as for the collective identities of ethnic groups or other groups. Awareness of the importance of history is in fact growing, which has compelled museums and other cultural heritage institutions to become more inclusive and representative.[34] Above all, the politics of memorialization have proved to be a powerful source for emancipatory struggles for Roma and other colonized peoples, which I frame in this book around the notion of historical justice: struggles for recognition, apologies, material compensation, memorials and memorial days, historical rectification and awareness-raising activities.

However, with few exceptions, there is an overall lack of historical writing about the Romani people and their process of seeking liberation, emancipation and historical justice. In an effort to fill this gap, the online knowledge platform RomArchive (Digital Archive of the Roma) made a curated selection of material available on the history of the Romani civil rights movement in 2019.[35] RomArchive was established on the initiative of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the European Roma Cultural Foundation based in Budapest. The stated purpose of the platform is to decolonize knowledge by highlighting Romani perspectives on Romani culture, politics, and history.

The section dealing with the Romani civil rights movement was curated by Professor of Romani Studies Thomas Acton, sociologist Angéla Kóczé, anthropologist Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, and myself as a historian. Historical developments of the movement after 1945 are covered in essays on Argentina and Latin America, Finland, France, Canada and the USA, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Germany, Hungary and Austria. In addition, the section includes in-depth essays on the transnational Romani civil rights movement, migration, historical justice and the fight to counter antigypsyism, the women's movement, youth activism and de-segregation activism.

The extensive, and hitherto not comparatively analyzed body of material presented in RomArchive constitutes the most important source material in my research.

34 See, e.g., Riksantikvarieämbetet, "Kulturen är mångfald!"

35 See www.romarchive.eu. Note that due to copyright restrictions, RomArchive has not posted all available material on its website. Other material is made available upon request. RomArchive is managed by The Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg, Germany, www.sintiundroma.de.

The fundamental questions explored in this book are: What happened, when and why? What conditions favored or hindered Romani emancipation and liberation? It is beyond the scope of this book to cover all countries equally or to go in depth with organizational structures of Romani movements. Instead, I wish to highlight some crucial historical stages of success and some important protagonists. By including a more comprehensive study of the Swedish experiences, my aim is to connect the Swedish historiography with the international, thereby discussing reciprocal contexts and lessons to be learned.

I have previously published parts of my research results in Swedish and English. In this book, I have added more material, re-examined my results and put them together into a larger body of work intended for a wider international audience.

Outline

The first part of the book explores different aspects of the international history of Romani emancipation and liberation. Chapter 1 provides a chronological perspective on important steps like the migration to Europe, the earliest examples of emancipation in medieval Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire, the affirmative actions of the early Soviet Union in the 1920s, and the multifaceted Romani resistance to Nazism. The chapter then describes the Romani movement's shifting agenda and organizational forms—from the 1950s cosmopolitan Romani think tank in Paris and the issue of basic civil rights via the legendary first World Romani Congress in London on April 8, 1971, to the 2010s professionalized NGO activism on inclusion and discrimination.

Chapter 2 looks at the connection between Romani politics in different countries in relation to historical justice and the fight against antigypsyism. The analysis shows how battles around writing history became linked both with the quest for social justice and with collective Romani identity discourses. The chapter provides a thematic overview of important outcomes of the struggles: commissions of inquiry, apologies and recognitions, material compensation issues, memory politics, memorial days and physical memorials as well as giving examples of Romani extra-parliamentary interventions against antigypsyism.

Chapter 3 is based on the ideology-critical problem of how marginalizing and epistemically oppressive tendencies in Romani studies (and its historical predecessor "Gypsiology") can be identified and overcome. Through

the historiographical analysis of a large body of literature, the development of these issues over time is discussed. The problem comes to a head in the current controversy whether the Gypsy Lore Society should be held historically accountable for its role in legitimizing antigypsyism. The chapter provides a deeper understanding of the goal of Romani and non-Romani academic activists to decolonize Romani studies. It also sheds light on the defensive mechanisms from within traditional Romani studies, when the critical gaze scholars normally expose others to is turned against scholarship itself and epistemic responsibility is claimed. Chapter 4 synthesizes the discussions of the previous chapters from three historiographical perspectives: the actor-based, the structural, and the discourse perspective.

The second part of the book provides an in-depth case study of Swedish historical experiences, how they can be understood in the international struggle, and why the Swedish example in recent years has often been referred to internationally. Chapter 5 provides a background to the social and political position of the different Romani groups at a time when the Swedish Romani civil rights movement took considerable leaps forward in the 1960s and entered the long road that culminated in the recognition of Roma, including the group called *Resande*, as a Swedish national minority in 2000. This history is depicted as a complex interplay between Romani activism, the emergence of the Swedish welfare state, and the influence of greater Europe.

Chapter 6 dissects the dynamics that created momentum in the push for Romani rights in Sweden in the first half of the 2010s: a governmental "White Paper" on historical abuses against Romani people, the revelation of illegal ethnic registering by the police, the "Romani beggars" debate, and a state commission against antigypsyism led by Thomas Hammarberg. The analysis shows how strategic policy choices by Roma and non-Roma actors intended to promote Romani rights were continuously challenged by antigypsy counter-discourses. The chapter also provides examples of how public debate can be swayed by unpredictable media events, such as the revelation of the police registers and what has come to be called the refugee crisis.

Each chapter is supplemented with an excursus on more detailed topics like the 1956 abolition of the Norwegian immigration ban against "Gypsies," the Berlin memorial to the Romani Holocaust victims, the history of the anthem "Djelem Djelem," the abolition of Romani slavery and its aftermath in today's Romania, a short biography of the Swedish Romani elder Rosa Taikon, and a bureaucratic attempt to forge a "collective Romani voice" in Sweden. In chapter 7, international and Swedish perspectives come together in a concluding

reflection on the purpose of writing Romani history and the conditions necessary for overcoming antigypsyism.

The book concludes with two afterwords by internationally well-renounced Swedish Romani activists, Soraya Post and Hans Caldaras. They both write from an inside perspective and give personal accounts of how their experiences have shaped their political consciousness. Hans Caldaras draws the long lines of oppression from his own history of growing up in Sweden where Roma were not allowed a permanent residence, to the persecution faced by Romani migrants from Eastern Europe who out of desperation beg for a living in Sweden. Soraya Post focuses on the widespread antigypsyism in Europe and raises the provocative question of whether the Eastern-European Romani people begging in Sweden are at present the most influential Romani activists considering that on a daily basis they illustrate the consequences of antigypsyism, which has put Romani questions on the agenda all across Europe.

Chapter 1

International Perspective: The Long Road to Liberation

India's Forgotten Children?

"They are forgotten children of India. Their roots and identities became an enigma because of absence of a written history but the veil is being lifted with modern researches [sic]." The above statement was made by the Director General of the Indian Council of Cultural Research (ICCR) in connection with the 2016 International Romani Conference and Cultural Festival in New Delhi.[1]

To further emphasize the point, the Director General also said that most Romani traditions and lifestyles are strikingly similar to those in modern day Punjab and that Romani people are proud of their Indian origin. Modern India has a long tradition of commitment to Romani people. In 1976, a major Romani world conference was held in Chandigarh, India. Activists from Finland, for example, were in attendance, who had the honor of meeting with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In 1971, the first World Romani Congress was held in London, which was also supported by the Indian government as well as the Romani cultural organizations that had emerged in communist Eastern Europe during the post-war period.[2]

From a Romani perspective, the Indian origin has likely become increasingly important with the emergence of a pan-Romani identity, in other words, a Romani identity that bridges the cultural and linguistic differences between all the different Romani groups. But what does the research say? As early as the eighteenth century, linguists dismissed the rumours that the mystical groups of "Gypsies," "Zigenuner," and "Taters" had originally come from Egypt, from

1 "ICCR Conference," *Times of India*, February 12, 2016.

2 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

1. In 1976, Finnish Roma participated in an international Roma conference in Chandigarh. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi demonstrated the Indian state's support through her presence. (Unknown photographer/SKS Helsinki)

the lost island of Atlantis, or that these groups were originally Jews who sought an escape from persecution in the Middle Ages by inventing a new language and pretending to be an unknown, exotic people. To debunk these notions, early linguists were able to present irrefutable evidence: the Romani language has its origins in Sanskrit, and the origins of the Romani people can be traced to Indian Punjab.[3] But that is as far as the consensus reaches.

Or it may be more accurate to say that beyond the question of origin, contemporary scholarship on Romani history has become increasingly divided. Who were the ancestors of the Roma? When, how, and why did they come to Europe? The lack of consensus also has a political dimension, which relates to the cultural memories of Roma (how Roma see themselves) and the cultural memories of the majority societies (how the majority society views Romani people). From the time of the eighteenth-century linguists until very recently, the dominant view within Romani studies was that Romani people originated from the casteless *shudras* and that they had been brought to Europe as slaves

3 The most influential scholar for synthesizing these findings was Heinrich Grellmann. See Selling, "Conceptual Gypsy." To mention are also the Swedish eighteenth-century works: Björckman, *Dissertatio academica de cingaris* (1730) and Rabenius, *Observationes historiam Ziguenorum* (1791). See the new edition of these in a Swedish translation, Hagberg, *"-dessa synnerligen otacksamma främlingar."*

or servants to groups of people with higher status, or that culturally conditioned inclinations towards nomadism and migration brought the Roma to Europe in an infinite number of possible paths. Low social status and nomadism were considered essential, unchanging characteristics of Romani people. In addition, the Roma's Indian origin also served to explain the "exotic" or even "magical" characteristics of the Roma and was seized upon as a way to dismiss the Roma as outsiders on the European continent.[4] History has thus been written in a way that reinforced the image of Roma as low-status outsiders governed by innate nomadic instincts. In this way, the varied stories of the Romani people's journey from India to Europe helped give birth to centuries of antigypsyism, which continues to shape many people's views of Roma and fantasies about exotic "Gypsies" today.

Anatolia, a Romani Melting Pot

Historiography is not a natural science, and as a practice it relies heavily on the interpretation of information. The function of historiography is to create meaning and define communities in society through collective memories. As such, it is always a political exercise and subject to change (more on this in chapter 3). The perspective taken in this book is Romani liberation and critique of antigypsyism. How, then, can the question of the origins of Romani be answered from this perspective? The Romani American professor of English, linguistics, and Asian studies, Ian Hancock, turns the question on its head: of course, the ancestors of Romani were from India, but the language, Romani Chib, and Romani culture originated almost a thousand years ago in Anatolia, where the Romani lived and worked for hundreds of years. According to Hancock, this culture emerged from the convergence of different groups who emigrated from India sometime after the year 1000 and who had skills that were in demand in the multicultural Byzantine Empire on the edge of the Mediterranean.[5] The implication of Hancock's assertion is that nomadism is not a distinguishing characteristic of Roma. Secondly, he situates Romani culture within European cultural history. Thirdly, he questions the notion that Romani culture would have sprung from the social heritage of the casteless shudras. Hancock contends that his assertion that emigration would have occurred after the year

4 See Grellmann, *Historischer Versuch*.

5 Hancock, "Keynote."

1000, but not before, is proven by the fact that all Romani Chib dialects have two genders, and that most Indian languages, including the predecessors to Romani, dropped a third gender no earlier than this point in history.[6] The history of the Romani people could thus take its starting point in this time and place in Anatolia, on the edge of Europe.

Hancock's thesis is largely supported by British Professor of Romani Studies Thomas Acton. He contends that the relatively rapid advancement of the modern Romani's ancestors over broad, feudal territories could not possibly have occurred without some form of organization and armed reinforcement. According to Acton, the likeliest scenario is that these were groups of artisans, musicians, and soldiers who were a part of the armies fleeing the expansion of the Muslim Seljuks, who were pushing into the territory east of Afghanistan at this time. It should also be kept in mind that the armies of this era can be likened to mobile cities, with men, women, and children who jointly provided for the needs of a substantial military force. Upon arrival in Anatolia, Romani people entered into alliances with local princes who needed their military prowess and craft skills.[7]

Early Emancipation and Slavery

When the Romani people first arrived in Anatolia, different groups carved out clear niches anchored in different professions; above all, they were free people. It was during this era that what we would now call an ethnic identity started to emerge, though without a connection to any particular country. In his dissertation, the Romani historian Adrian Marsh shows that already in the Byzantine Empire, Roma were commonly sedentary, tax-paying, free citizens.[8] Even after the Muslim conquest and birth of the Ottoman Empire, the Romani people retained their status simply because they practiced essential trades and had the right to do so as free people. The part of the Ottoman Empire that stretched into Europe, the Balkans and the area around Istanbul, largely retained its multicultural character. Both Christianity and Islam were tolerated within the empire, and there have been both Christian and Muslim Roma since that time. It can be said that in several respects the Roma were emancipated, able to enter into agreements, and free. Roma would continue

6 Hancock, *We Are the Romani People*, 8.
7 Acton, "Migration and the Roma."
8 Marsh, "No Promised Land."

to enjoy this status within the region until the twentieth century, unlike in Western and Northern Europe, where Roma were subjected to persecution at the hands of the state and church soon after their arrival.

Still, the Ottoman Empire was a loosely connected empire, and the relative freedom the Roma enjoyed did not apply everywhere. In the predominantly Christian provinces of Transylvania, Moldova, and Wallachia, Roma were denied their liberty and held as slaves since the beginning of the fourteenth century by local princes and monasteries. Slavery was abolished in 1790 in Transylvania, but it was not until 1856 that Romani gained their freedom in Moldova and Wallachia, provinces of present-day Romania.[9] The liberation of Romani was ultimately precipitated by the same causes that resulted in the abolition of African American slavery: liberal ideas about the equal value of all human beings had started to gain a foothold, but above all, it was becoming increasingly clear that slavery was economically inefficient in an increasingly industrialized, capitalist economy.[10]

The freed slaves in Romania never received any form of compensation or right to land. Many Romani from Wallachia and Moldova decided to move north and west, to create distance between themselves and their former slave owners. Some Roma followed the wave of economic migration to America and Australia. During this era, a large number of British Romanichals sought a better future in America. In this way, the Romani diaspora expanded, and Romani communities were formed across several continents.

Persecution and Protective Letters of Safe Conduct

The depiction of Romani arrival to a hostile Western and Northern Europe does not capture the full story. In many places the Romani moved, there is evidence that their arrival was met with curiosity, or even veneration, as the Roma were sometimes seen as pilgrims. In historical documents in Sweden, Romani leaders are often referred to as *greve* (count). When the first Roma arrived in Stockholm in 1512, "Count Antonius and his entourage" were provided with housing and a small amount of money for subsistence.[11] In feudal

9 Achim, *Roma in Romanian History*; cf. Hancock, *We Are the Romani People.*

10 Hancock, *We Are the Romani People,* 23–28.

11 *Stockholms Tänkebok,* 29 September 1512. Quoted from comments to facsimile at: www.stockholmskallan.stockholm.se. This and all further quotes of non-English sources are translations by the author, if not otherwise declared.

Germany, a Romani entourage would sometimes be issued a letter of safe conduct, which meant that a prince or king took the group under his protection. This meant that anyone who attacked the Romani entourage would be punished. One such letter was provided for Romani Count Michel, when in 1442, King Friedrich III declared: "Count Michel and his entourage shall be allowed to travel freely through our country, their money shall be accepted to buy anything they need, and they shall not be unduly encumbered and no one shall be permitted to encumber them."[12]

Within Sweden, one example of the goodwill Roma sometimes encountered from local rulers was that of Count Per Brahe, who in seventeenth century Gränna allowed Romani people to settle and engage in trade. There has been a population of the Romani group *Resande* in several south Swedish cities since that time. Brahe also allowed Roma to settle on abandoned farms in the Finnish part of the Swedish Empire, in the border region with Russia. The warrior king, Charles XII, also had a favorable attitude towards Roma and allowed them to enlist in his army.[13] Through his research, historian Miika Tervonen has also added nuance to the common image of Roma as unwanted outsiders. According to Tervonen, there was actually a kind of mutual dependence between the rural population and the travelling Roma who provided valuable agricultural and artisan services.[14] There are many similar isolated examples across mainland Europe. But overall, the historical picture is quite dark. As early as 1498, the Roman-German Empire declared the Romani people outlaws. The reason for the declaration was said to be that the Roma were in alliance with the devil and that they were spying for the Turks.[15]

In other words, the same kind of accusations and draconian persecution directed against the Jews was also used to target Roma. Roma were sometimes allowed to settle, for example, in Spain and Hungary, but the price for this was the abandonment of their culture and language, which were outlawed. Violations of the bans would result in brutal punishment. This is the main reason why several Romani dialects are now nearly extinct, including Spanish Caló, Finnish Kale, Scandinavian Romani, and Hungarian Romani. The policy of the Protestant Church of Sweden ranged between forbidding priests from having any dealings with Romani to suddenly using the church hall as

12 "Geleitbrief König Friedrichs III."
13 Hazell, *Resandefolket*.
14 Tervonen, "'Gypsies,' 'Travellers' and 'Peasants.'"
15 Wippermann, *Wie die Zigeuner*.

a means for forced assimilation.[16] This can be likened to the politics of the Prussian government in the late eighteenth century, which first forbade Jews from shaving and then forced them to shave.[17] In much the same way that baptism was the Jews' "entry ticket to European culture" (as was the case for Jewish writer Heinrich Heine, who was baptized in order to pursue an academic career[18]), abandoning their culture and blending in as much as possible was the only chance Roma had to survive in a hostile environment. True Romani emancipation was not even on the table. And even when Romani people and the Jews did submit to these draconian restrictions, it was no guarantee of protection when the hostility became fuelled by the ideology of biological racism.

In the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, as in the Ottoman Empire, the Roma were granted the right to settle, work, and were subsequently taxed.[19] In Tsarist Russia, some Roma rose to prominent positions in the country's cultural scene, not least in choral music, but what is most notable is that there was no state-sponsored, racial persecution of Roma.[20] On the contrary, Roma enjoyed certain civil rights. Historian Martin Holler has described the situation of Roma in Tsarist Russia as much freer than in Western Europe.[21] But overall, the group was still socially disadvantaged and endured significant prejudice.

"Equal Citizens of the Soviet Union"

In the early days of the Soviet Union, Romani status in Soviet society was significantly improved when they were recognized as one of the historically oppressed minorities of the multinational state under the framework of the so-called *korenizatsyia* policy (коренизация, "indigenization").[22] This policy aimed at elevating Romani to the status of equal Soviet citizens through raising awareness. Above all, it meant that all Soviet Roma should become sedentary and attend school. Interestingly, the policy was not narrowly focused

16 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.
17 Stillschweig, *Judarnas emancipation*, 29–30.
18 Heine, quoted in Stillschweig, *Judarnas emancipation,* 36.
19 Acton, "Migration and the Roma"; Marsh, "No Promised Land"; Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Mirga-Wójtowicz, "Roma Movement in Poland."
20 Holler, "Historical Predecessors."
21 Holler, "Historical Predecessors."
22 Holler, "Historical Predecessors"; see also Marushiakova and Popov, "Soviet Union."

on assimilation, since the project to elevate Romani status also extended into the domain of Romani culture. Similar to the Sami, a written language was created for the Romani and major investments were made in education and Romani cultural activities. A Romani intelligentsia emerged. A notable member of this intelligentsia was Alexander German, who in 1928 coined the term "antigypsyism" (антицыганизм), which in his understanding referred to deeply rooted, discriminatory attitudes against Roma. Within the ideological framework German encountered, he agitated against antigypsyism as a relic of Tsarist Russia. Romani cultural associations, schools, theatres, and publishing houses emerged, and Roma (as well as members of other repressed nationalities) were given preference within certain educational programs. It can be said that the Roma were emancipated to a certain extent. But at the same time, it was a kind of liberation within the confines of a system that was not exactly free, which, for example, meant that protections for freedom of religion and freedom of expression were lacking. When the *korenizatsyia* experiment was discontinued in 1938, it signalled the end of virtually all the Romani cultural projects that had been created, with the exception of the Teatr Romen in Moscow. Stalin ushered in draconian measures, including purges, throughout the party-state apparatus, and several ethnic groups were forcibly relocated. The Roma, however, were not subjected to this form of ethnically motivated persecution by the Soviet state.[23]

In 1871 Germany, Jews were fully emancipated when the last formal occupational prohibitions and other openly discriminatory laws were abolished in connection with the merger of Bavaria, Prussia, and small states in northern Germany under the German Empire. But there was no mention of emancipation for Sinti or Roma. On the contrary, rules were maintained and centralized under the new empire, restricting the freedom of movement of Sinti and Roma, and central registers were established with the aim of "combating the Gypsy plague." In 1921, during the interwar period, the Prussian state government foreshadowed the atrocities that were to come when they began detaining Jews who had immigrated from the East in facilities that were designated as concentration camps.[24] The practice was halted after the German Jewish Workers' Welfare Office protested against the degrading and brutal treatment in the camps. German Sinti and Roma increasingly found themselves in a no-man's-land, but they lacked access to organizations that could help them fight

23 Marushiakova and Popov, "Soviet Union."

24 Wippermann, *Wie die Zigeuner*, 130–131.

back against the systematic violations of their rights, which occurred already in interwar Germany.[25]

In 1933, the emancipation of the Jews was wiped out in a flash when the Nazis came into power. While Hitler was utterly consumed with the idea of fighting Jews and Bolsheviks, he was patently uninterested in the "Gypsy issue." But Hitler's racial scientists and lawyers were quite interested, as was SS leader Heinrich Himmler. In Nazi Germany, Sinti, Roma, and Jews were all affected by the Nuremberg Race Law's ban on "mixed marriages," and the groups' already fragile civil rights were an early casualty of Nazi rule.

Resistance During Nazi Rule

Anton Rose, whose grandson Romani would later become the leader of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, was a cinema owner in Darmstadt, and in 1934, he was prohibited from working. After being warned of an impending deportation order in 1940, the family fled the country through Europe. But in the end, they could not escape the Nazis. Anton's wife Lisetta Rose lost her life in Ravensbrück, a concentration camp for female Jews, Communists, Sinti, Roma, homosexuals, and other groups targeted by the Nazi extermination policy known as the Final Solution, as well as "habitual offenders."[26] Several male members of the family were deported to the "Gypsy camp" in Auschwitz. On May 16, 1944, the Gestapo made a first attempt to "liquidate" the "Gypsy camp," but Roma and Sinti in the barracks had been warned and defended themselves with homemade weapons, shovels, and stones until the guards were forced to retreat.[27] In recent years, this event has been commemorated as Roma Resistance Day.

On August 2, 1944, no amount of resistance would stop the camp guards who, in a single day, killed Anton Rose and nearly 3,000 other Sinti and Roma in Auschwitz. This date has been memorialized as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day since 2015. Thirteen direct relatives of Romani Rose were murdered by the Nazis. Anton and Lisetta Rose's son Oskar (Romani Rose's father) survived by living in hiding throughout the war. With the help of a Polish truck driver, he managed to smuggle his brother Vinzenz out of a concentration camp in 1944. Using false identity documents, they were able to survive in

25 Wippermann, *Wie die Zigeuner*.
26 Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "Widerstand von Sinti und Roma."
27 Brooks, "Preface," 10.

2. Oskar Rose managed to evade the Nazis by using fake documents, and in 1944, he and a Polish truck driver were able to smuggle his brother Vinzenz (pictured below) out of the Neckarelz concentration camp and thus save him from certain death. The brothers Oskar and Vinzenz would go on to lay the foundations for the German Sinti and Roma civil rights movement. (Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti and Roma)

3. Vinzenz Rose. (Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti and Roma)

Germany until the end of the war. They would go on to make substantial contributions to the struggle for Romani and Sinti civil rights.

Another exceptional example of Sinti resistance is the boxer Johann "Rukeli" Trollmann. After the 1928 Olympics, he stood out as one of Germany's most promising light heavyweight boxers. But soon after the Nazis took power, all

organizations were to be "aryanized." This also applied to the boxing association, and Trollmann was banned. But he continued his career, and in June 1933, he became the German champion. Eight days after his victory, he was stripped of the title. In July that same year, he carried out a public protest by entering the ring with dyed blond hair and white powder on his skin. In the

4. Sports facility in Berlin dedicated to the anti-Nazi boxer Johann Trollmann. (Wikimedia commons.)

5. Stumbling stones in Hanover, in memory of the boxer Johann Trollmann and his brother who were murdered by the Nazis. (Wikimedia commons.)

6. The memorial to the Sinto boxer Johann Trollmann tells of his unwavering opposition to the Nazis, which ended in his murder. (Wikimedia commons.)

7. Polish Romani Alfreda Markowska saved a large number of Jewish and Roma children from the Holocaust. She herself fled the Red Army but was then subjected to the forced assimilation of the Communist regime in Poland. It was not until 2006 that the Polish state honored her efforts during the war by awarding her Order of Polonia Restituta. (Photo: Chad Wyatt.)

years that followed, he was repeatedly arrested, and in 1938, he was forced to endure several months of forced labor. In 1939, he was sent to the eastern front as a soldier, where he sustained combat injuries. In 1942, he was banned from military service because he was "non-Aryan." He was arrested once again and tortured before being deported to the Neuengamme concentration camp. During his time in the concentration camp, Trollmann was repeatedly forced to box. Malnourished and weakened by forced labor, he was beaten to death in 1944 in the Wittenberge camp.[28]

Despite the hopeless situation, Roma and Sinti mounted resistance in other countries as well. Resistance included evading deportations, obtaining food and medicine but also attempts to liberate Romani people from the Nazis. A prominent example is the Polish Roma Alfreda Markowska, who on multiple occasions—on her own initiative and at tremendous risk to her own life—rescued a total of 50 Romani and Jewish children who had survived Nazi massacres, hid them, and secured false identity documents.[29] Roma, Sinti, and Travelers also participated in the organized anti-Nazi resistance in France,

28 Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "Widerstand von Sinti und Roma."
29 Kóczé, "Romani Women's Movement."

8. Romani artist Alexander Baurov voluntarily enlisted in the Red Army and was later decorated as a hero in the fight against Nazi Germany. (Photo: Private Archive Nikolaj Bessonov, Moscow/Martin Holler.)

Spain, and Eastern Europe, where many joined the partisan struggle, especially in Yugoslavia. Romani people also participated as soldiers in the Allied and Soviet forces in the liberation of 1945.[30]

Historical research has not been able to determine the true number of victims of the Nazi genocide of Romani, Sinti, Travelers, and other people labelled "Gypsies." According to the best information we have, at least 220,000 Romani people fell victim to the Holocaust,[31] but the official figure in Germany is often stated as 500,000.[32] There are a number of reasons researchers have been unable to create a more accurate picture of the scale of the genocide. For starters, Romani people were seldom registered in the population register before the war and the bureaucrats in the Nazi extermination camps, with the exception of Auschwitz, were less thorough about listing the number of Romani people exterminated than they were for Jews. But it is also because the genocide was largely carried out through undocumented massacres in occupied parts of the Soviet Union and the Balkans.[33] Still, it has been unequivocally determined that it was in fact a genocide, that it took place in the context of the Holocaust, and that the Nazi persecution and extermination of Romani people was based on racism.

30 Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, "Widerstand von Sinti und Roma"; Acton, "Migration and the Roma."
31 Kenrick, "Genocide of the Gypsies."
32 This is the figure given, for example, at the Berlin Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism.
33 Kenrick, "Genocide of the Gypsies."

1940s: Fragments of Early Activism

The progression of the Romani civil rights movement since the end of World War Two can best be visualized as a tree. The tree's roots vary in size and stretch out in different directions, without direct connections to each other. They come together in a single, strong trunk, with different branches and lead up to a crown with an almost incalculable number of offshoots, which again stretch out in different directions. But without the roots and trunk, the offshoots would not exist. To continue the analogy, during its growth, the tree has taken nourishment from, but also had to fight against, the surrounding environment and changing climate.

This story begins at a time when Europe is in ruins and centuries of antigypsyism have culminated in the Nazi extermination policies. Exiled in France, the evangelical Spanish-Romani author Matéo Maximoff put this experience into words already in 1946.[34] In Germany and Austria, Sinti and Roma liberated from Nazi camps were met with contempt. They faced persecution once again at the hands of the police and administrative systems, which in turn put them in camps, though different than the Nazi camps. There was no room for activism here. They chose to hide their ethnicity whenever they could to avoid the new form of repression. There was no trust in the majority society's scientists, politicians, and officials.

An equally remote possibility is the notion that the Norwegian and Swedish Travelers, the Resande (exonym: "tattare"), could openly advocate for their cause during this period. The harshness of forced assimilation had also forced these groups to withdraw in anonymity, unless they had already fallen victims to the "combating of the tattare plague." The other major Romani group in Sweden at the time, the only 400 individuals of Vlach origin (exonym: "zigenare"), experienced racist exclusion and had lived as *sans papiers* since their entry at the end of the nineteenth century. When these Swedish Roma got to present their case for the first time on paper during this period, the Kalderash representative Johan Taikon acquired his authority from traditional structures and was called a "Gypsy chief" in the press.[35] Despite this, he managed to find a certain degree of success by obtaining a trial run of teaching activities in Romani camps for a few months in 1943, which definitely meant sowing the seeds of change. It is unclear from where another Swedish Roma, Rupert Bersico, drew his author-

34 Maximoff, "Germany and the Gypsies."
35 "Zigenarhövding," *Svensk Läraretidning*.

ity when he brought forward the demand for a "Gypsy inquiry," but his petition also pushed the cause a little bit further.[36] (See below.)

In Finland, the Roma also started to seek meaningful change as early as the 1940s. Here, the Roma faced a situation that was completely different than for the Roma in Sweden. The Roma had for a long time been recognized as citizens, and many fought in the Finnish army during the war, but they still faced systematic discrimination and often lived in harsh conditions. The forced assimilation policy was carried out in part through a state-supported Christian missionary initiative, the "Gypsy mission," which is a structural similarity to the Norwegian case.

In 1946, Finnish Roma mobilized for the first time in an open protest. It was led by Ferdinand Nikkinen, who managed to collect 364 signatures on a letter to petition the government to stop the Gypsy mission's activities. Given the available modes of communication at the time and the lack of independent Romani structures, it was quite an achievement to have this relatively extensive collection of names around a clear and radical demand.[37]

In Spain, a number of Roma had pinned their hopes on the Spanish Republic. One of these was the poet, painter, and anarcho-communist activist Helios Gómez, who was appointed political commissar of the anarcho-syndicalist trade union CNT and played an active role in the armed struggle of the republic.[38] After the Franco regime seized power, he was imprisoned until shortly before his death in 1956. In Franco's Spain, the very word *Kalo* (Spanish Roma) was banned. Efforts to improve the situation of Roma were only possible under the protection of the clergy and with the sanction of the Franco regime.[39] Despite the harshness of the period, this gave socially engaged priests opportunities to work for Romani rights within this system, which lasted until the death of Franco in 1975.

In several countries, the liberation from the Nazis by the Red Army marked the beginning of a new form of repression, which manifested as systematic assimilation projects with the signature of state socialism, particularly in Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. But the picture was not the same everywhere. In Yugoslavia, it was acknowledged that Roma had played a role in the partisan army, and Romani culture was tolerated.[40] The fact that Roma were members of society and had already been partially emanci-

36 Bersico, "Letter to the Ministry."
37 Stenroos, "Movement in Finland."
38 Museu Virtual del Poble Gitano a Catalunya, "Helios Gomez"; Mirga-Kruszelnicka, "Movement in Spain."
39 Mirga-Kruszelnicka, "Movement in Spain."
40 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

pated during the Ottoman era was part of the collective memory. In several of the countries that ended up behind the Iron Curtain after 1945, there was a history of Romani self-organization since the turn of the century, not least in Hungary.[41] Even in the Soviet Union, there were traditions of self-organization to fall back on. The brutal Stalinization of society in the 1930s meant that most of the Romani projects under the *Korenizatsyia* policies vanished. But what remained was a group of highly educated, politically savvy Romani who had insights into what may be possible.[42] This group played an important role in the emergence of the Romani civil rights movement during the post-war period.

1950s: The Paris Milieu and Legal Emancipation

The international Romani movement can trace its roots to the intellectual Romani migrant milieu of Paris in the 1950s, which, among other things, pushed for rehabilitation and compensation after Nazi persecution. Key figures in this movement include Matéo Maximoff and Žarko Jovanović, as well as Pentecostal pastors with Kalderash heritage and the eccentric Romanian Romani writer Ionel Rotaru, who in 1959 staged a theatrical mass media coup by publicly crowning himself King of the Ursari Roma. This in turn inspired non-Romani intellectuals to start calling themselves the real Bohemians, which in today's terms would earn the label "cultural appropriation" (or philoziganism), since *bohemiens* was another term for Roma. One of the lasting results to come out of the 1950s Romani milieu in Paris is the magazine *Études Tsiganes,* which was founded in 1954 and is still being published. The network created in Paris in the 1950s would form a foundation for the institutionalized Romani movement that was about to emerge.[43]

Far removed from this informal think tank in Paris, a paradigm shift was taking hold in Sweden, where repressive anti-Romani policies, which were based on racial biology, were replaced by an assimilation project led by the Social Democrats. There were a number of driving forces behind this shift. On the international level, racial biology had been politically condemned and scientifically debunked. The Swedish brand of state-sponsored antigypsyism thus lost its foothold. Social physician and Communist John Takman presented a seminal

41 Kóczé, "Movement in Hungary."
42 Holler, "Historical Predecessors"; cf. Marushiakova and Popov, "Soviet Union."
43 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma"; Liegouis, "Movement in France."

research report in 1952, putting into words what everyone could already plainly see: the exclusion policy had devastating effects on Romani health and was unworthy of a country that was striving to be the world's most modern and just.[44] Takman was behind the Communist Party's 1953 motion in the Riksdag regarding measures to "give the Gypsies an equal position with other Swedish citizens."[45] Along with Johan Taikon's petitions, the motion helped precipitate the "Gypsy Inquiry," which, with its final report in 1956, finally put an end to outdated, repressive policies. However, the Gypsy Inquiry did not go as far as implementing measures to counter antigypsy attitudes, which the Communist Party had demanded. An outward manifestation of this failure can be seen in the Parliamentary Ombudsman's attitude towards the expulsion of Roma from the public camping site in Ludvika in 1956: it was a violation of standard policing but could not be considered racial discrimination.[46]

Taken as a whole, the process that was put in motion in Sweden during this period can still be seen as an expression of both social and legal emancipation. Roma became citizens and gained the right to housing and schooling. Roma also gained the opportunity to assert their rights in court, and the immigration ban, which was a clear case of ethnic discrimination, had been lifted in 1954. It represented true progress, which was achieved thanks to Romani and non-Romani activists alike, but also thanks to radical social change.

Yet, this step for Romani liberation was a geographically isolated phenomenon. Another example of burgeoning Romani activism in the absence of a unified international movement is that of the English Gypsies who started to mount resistance to the constant expulsions that forced them to move from place to place. With the support of a Labour politician in 1951, they carried out a successful lobbying campaign in parliament that opened the eyes of the ruling Labour Party to the living conditions of Gypsies, something, they decided, that had to be resolved. This progress was reversed when Labour lost the election, and the new Tory government rejected the Gypsyies' claims with the racially charged argument that they were not racially "true Romanies." This assertion was supported by a letter from the secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society.[47] In spite of this setback, the British Romani civil rights struggle had established a firm foothold, and this early resistance sent ripples that could be felt all the way

44 Takman, "Socialpsykiatriska synpunkter."
45 Sveriges Riksdag. "Motion i andra kammaren 1953."
46 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*. See also discussion in chapter 6.
47 Acton, "Movement in Great Britain."

up to the defense of Dale Farm some 60 years later.[48] In a number of ways, the agenda of the English Gypsies was similar to that of the Swedish Roma during the same period, but there was not yet an international forum where Romani people could exchange experiences and formulate political strategies.

1960s: Internationalization and Extra-Parliamentary Struggle

During the 1960s, the Romani movement in France took a number of major leaps forward. Led by Ionel Rotaru, the Communauté Mondiale Gitane (CMG) was founded with the stated purpose of working for change on the international level. The issue of restitution and compensation for the suffering endured under the Nazis was an issue that unified Roma across the globe. A network of contacts was established between activists in Poland, Canada, and Turkey. But in the early years of the movement, CMG had the greatest impact within the borders of France. Rotaru's agenda in France was to encourage Roma to seek work in bourgeois professions, but also to provide itinerant Roma with more legal opportunities to settle in the country. In 1964, the CMG wrote letters to all members of the National Assembly demanding legal and social emancipation: the repeal of old laws explicitly targeted against "nomadism" and the abolition of anthropometric identity cards for "nomads," the right to schooling (including for itinerant Roma), and the right for Roma to register their own businesses and become taxpayers. The activists eventually ended up on a collision course with the government, and in 1965, the government dissolved the organization based on the accusation that it had too many non-Frenchmen in its leadership. The group re-emerged two years later with the support of the Roma Pentecostal Church under the name Comité International Tsigane (CIT). Repeatedly, leading members of the group were brought in for police questioning with the argument that they were a threat to state security. CIT published its own newspaper and created a contingent of Roma within PEN, the worldwide association of writers. In 1968, CIT played a role in the success of nomadic English Gypsies who managed to convince the government to enact legislation restricting eviction from caravan sites (Caravan Sites Act, England and Wales). International lobbying campaigns were also targeted at the Vatican, but the biggest success came in 1969 when the Council of Europe recommended that all member states implement

48 See below in chapter 2.

9. Meeting in connection with the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 at Slottsbacken in Stockholm. From the left: Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr., Paul Rimmerfors, and Katarina Taikon. (Photo: Per Anders Thunqvist).

reform programmes to improve conditions for Roma, adding that these programs must be developed in collaboration with Roma.[49]

Within Sweden and Finland, the Romani extra-parliamentary struggle began in the 1960s. This was precipitated by frustration with the failure of the governments to deliver the social improvements that had been promised. Through demonstrations, writing, and the direct confrontation of politicians, activists used an approach that was timely. In Katarina Taikon, the movement had found a standard-bearer that inspired people to action in both Sweden and Finland, but the Nordic Romani movement still had little international connection to the wider movement that started in France. In Sweden, the activists' approach to protest and rhetoric was leaning on the experience of the labor movement and the contemporary African American civil rights movement. Zigenarsamfundet (the Gypsy Association) and the Romani cause

49 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma"; Acton, "Movement in Great Britain"; Liegouis, "Movement in France."

seemed to come of age at just the right time, precisely because the cause could be tied together with other major political issues. On December 13, 1964, the movement reached a new high point when a meeting was held between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Katarina Taikon since King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and Taikon had just been appointed an honorary member of the Swedish Youth Peace Alliance. The movement adopted the motto: "Freedom to all people, peace to the whole world!"[50] A high-profile Romani May Day demonstration for the right to education was held in 1965, and in 1967, a protest campaign successfully secured the right of Romani refugees to remain in the country. But only two years later, a similar campaign failed, and Romani refugees were deported. For Katarina Taikon, this was a defeat that made her lose faith in politics, but she had put a face to the Swedish Romani civil rights struggle and helped establish an agenda that inspires people to action even today.

Simultaneously, the time seemed to be ripe for realizing Roma rights in Yugoslavia, and enter a stage which, with some justification, is often viewed through the lens of historical nostalgia. Since the country was a Communist single-party state, the initiative needed to come from within. It was taken by the former Romani partisan fighter and member of the Communist Party's Central Committee, Slobodan Berberski, who used the power of his authority to demand Romani rights in a 1969 newspaper article. Berberski demanded that Roma be allowed to form their own organization and be named one of Yugoslavia's official minorities. The proposal gained traction, and in the 1970s, a network of Romani organizations and cultural projects sprung up in Yugoslavia. In Kosovo, radio and television broadcasts in Romani Chib were introduced.[51]

1970s: World Romani Congress, German Sinti, and Norwegian Travelers

The first World Romani Congress in London in 1971 is now considered by far the most important event in the history of the Romani civil rights movement. The Romani flag as we know it today was adopted at this event, as was the national anthem "Djelem Djelem." And the actual date of the congress, April 8, is now International Romani Day. A majority of attendees at the congress also declared that the majority society's designations Gypsy, Zigeuner, and Tsiganes would no longer be used (although this decision is still debated, as English-

50 Rimmerfors, "Martin och Katarina."

51 Marushiakova and Popov, "State Policies Under Communism"; cf. Schulze, "Silenced Voices."

speaking Romani people wanted to keep the term Gypsy as a self-designation). Notwithstanding the importance of the event, Professor of Romani Studies Thomas Acton, a veteran of the movement himself, contends that the significance of the congress is the product of a series of coincidences and intrigue.[52]

One source of controversy among international activists concerned remuneration. Decisions concerning strategy represented a more significant conflict. The French activists were determined to organize a major meeting at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, while the British Gypsy Council wanted to put pressure on the British government by organizing a Romani congress in London. In early 1971, the British activists decided to take matters into their own hands. It was at that time that a number of important Romani activists were invited to London for a preparatory meeting in connection with a Romani music festival. When a substantial number of attendees, even from Eastern Europe, signalled their coming, it was simply declared The First World Romani Congress. Slobodan Berberski was elected President of the congress.[53] Matéo Maximoff translated the minutes of the congress into Romani. The Indian government adopted the role of patron to the congress while spreading the message that India was the original homeland of all Roma.[54]

The First World Romani Congress in London thus succeeded in codifying the range of emblematic actions that are still considered the backbone of Romani ethnopolitical activism and pan-Romani identity building. The fact that this organizational form outlived its usefulness the moment it was created, dissolving into a number of different competing branches that sometimes cooperate, is therefore of less importance.

Though completely isolated from the growing international activist movement, Norwegian Romani Travelers, *Reisende*, achieved monumental success in 1975. This time it was a journalist and an activist in tandem who triggered an avalanche that culminated in the demise of the Norwegian forced assimilation program. It was documentary filmmaker Vibeke Løkkeberg's report from Svanviken, which was broadcast on Norwegian television (*NRK*), that first opened the eyes of the Norwegian public to the totalitarian forced assimilation that was still being carried out on behalf of the *Norsk misjon blant hjemløse* (Norwegian Mission for the Homeless). In the film, several Romanis interned at the Svanviken labor camp were interviewed anonymously. Svanviken's manager openly explained that the mission was to bring about the extinction of

52 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

53 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma"; Zahova, "Slobodan Berberski."

54 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

the Romani culture. The report came about thanks to a Romani who was once interned at Svanviken, Johan Lauritzen, who had contacted Løkkeberg. In the report, Lauritzen states that he feared retaliation against his family, but that he had to take a stand and demand that the *misjonen's* forced assimilation come to an end: "I say abolish the Mission; we need our own organizations. As long as we live in fear, we will not be free, I want to encourage all Reisende to stand up and speak the truth."[55] The report triggered a media debate, which in turn forced the Stortinget to appoint a commission of inquiry. In 1980, the commission concluded that the forced assimilation policy should be abandoned.[56]

The pace of change also picked up steam in West Germany. After Sinto Anton Lehmann was shot to death by the police in 1973, a demonstration was organized in Heidelberg. This was the first time German Sinti openly protested in support of their cause, and they were backed up by leftist students residing in the city and the organization *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker* (Society for Threatened Peoples).[57] This combination of forces is one reason the German Sinti and Roma still keep the bases of their organizations in this city. Another reason is that the most prominent figures in this movement came from Heidelberg, notably the brothers Oskar and Vinzenz Rose, who in the late 1940s had been actively trying to get the German judiciary to hold those responsible for the genocide of Sinti and Roma accountable. But when this proved to be a dead end, they gradually turned to other forms of activism. A number of organizations were formed, including *Verband der Cinti Deutschlands* (Association of German Sinti). When its chairman Vinzenz Rose was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1978, he took the opportunity to declare once and for all: he wants to be called Cinto, not "Zigeuner," because "Zigeuner" in the German context is an unequivocally discriminatory term.[58]

1980s: Demands for Historical Justice and Invoking the Holocaust

During the 1980s, the international Romani movement splintered. The World Romani Congress in Göttingen, Germany in 1981 was the last time that all the important branches of the movement gathered in one place.[59] In the absence of

55 Løkkeberg, *Vindu mot vår tid*.
56 Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrating Essay."
57 Gress, "Sinti and Roma."
58 Laaf, "Ein Siebzigjähriger engagiert sich."
59 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

10. Sinti activists during the hunger strike in Dachau in 1980. (Photo: Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti and Roma.)

a unified movement, more and more national Romani organizations emerged in France, Spain, and Yugoslavia, among other countries. Roma also began to organize for the first time in Latin America, at first without a clear political direction, but more in the form of cultural organizations with evangelical influences.[60] In England, Romani people celebrated legislative success with the Education Act of 1981, which also gave nomadic children an unconditional right to state schooling.[61]

In Hungary, filmmakers and artists were beginning to call attention to the Nazi genocide of Romani people.[62] But it was in West Germany that the Romani struggle for historical justice was picking up momentum in earnest. Large-scale protests and hunger strikes were held, as well as memorial ceremonies in connection with the former concentration camps Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, and Neuengamme, capturing widespread media attention.

The 1970s intergenerational conflict in West Germany over Nazism had led to a transformed social climate. The country's ties to the brutal Nazi past

60 Bernal, "Argentina and Latin America."
61 Acton, "Movement in Great Britain."
62 Kóczé, "Movement in Hungary."

11. At the historic meeting of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma on 17 March 1982, Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recognized the Nazi genocide of the Sinti and Roma. (Photo: Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti and Roma.)

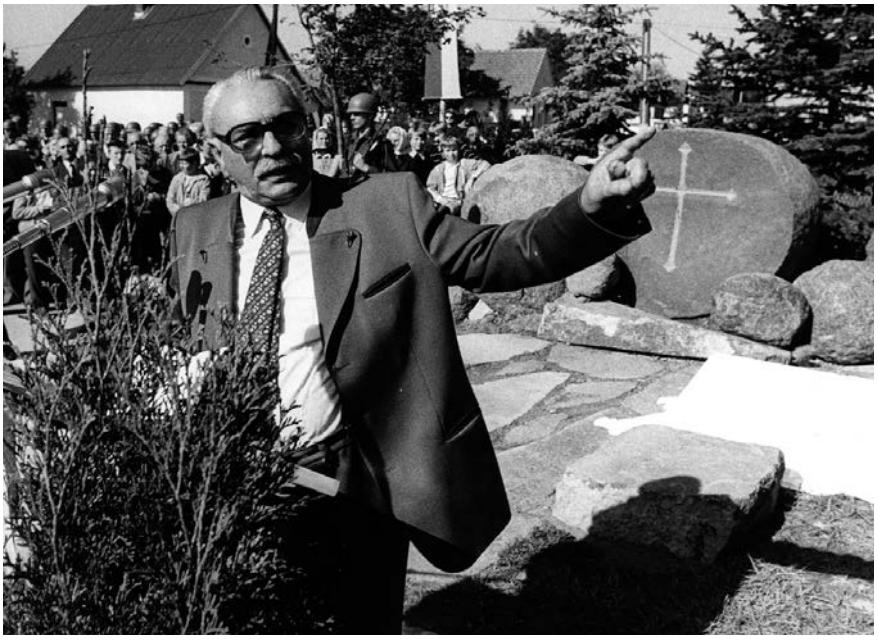
were publicly exposed through the occupation of the University Archives in Tübingen in 1981 by Sinti activists. It was then revealed that the archival material of the Nazi racial scientists was still being used, not only by unscrupulous researchers, but also by the police, who were found using tattooed concentration camp identification numbers to identify Sinti and Roma during ID checks.[63]

In 1982, the umbrella organization, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma was formed, which over the long term has proved to be perhaps Europe's most influential Romani organization. Right from its inception, the organization managed to deliver a decisive victory. After engaging in negotiations with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in 1982, he acknowledged West Germany's historical responsibility for the Nazi genocide of Sinti and Roma and declared that the persecution was racially motivated.[64]

The events in West Germany also had an impact in Austria, where Europe's first monument in memory of the genocide of Roma was inaugurated in 1984. Four years later, in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, the Chancellor of Austria formally acknowledged the country's historical responsibility for the persecution and murder of Sinti and Roma during Nazi rule.

At about the same time on the other side of the Atlantic, 1985–1986, Romani activists from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain waged a successful battle to get Roma recognized as victims in the Holocaust Memorial Museum that was being built in Washington DC.[65] One of these activists was

63 Gress, "Sinti and Roma"; Selling "Romani Rose: Interview."
64 Deutsche Bundesregierung. Pressemitteilung, 1982; Gress, "Sinti and Roma."
65 Lee, "Canada and the USA."



12. Sinto activist Josef Fojn from Vienna, during the inauguration of a memorial stone at the former concentration camp in Lackenbach, Austria, October 1984. The memorial was the first of its kind in Europe. (Photo: Erika Thurner)

Professor Ian Hancock. In the wake of the debate surrounding the United States Holocaust Museum, his ground-breaking book *The Pariah Syndrome* was published in which he wrote about Nazi persecution and genocide against the backdrop of a long history of antigypsyism in Europe. The book broke new ground by thoroughly addressing the 500 years of slavery of Romani in southeastern Europe. Even today, however, scholars and activists are reluctant to properly address Romani slavery, though the attention given to the persecution of Roma under Nazi rule has gradually increased. The Romani discourse on historical justice had begun. But the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 would completely redraw the political map and recast the agenda of civic activism.

1990s: The Fall of the Wall, Desegregation, Feminism, and the European Agenda

When the Berlin Wall officially came down through an unprepared statement at a press conference with the East German Communist Party on November 9, 1989, forces were set in motion that would cause the dictatorial state social-

13. Museum of Romani Culture in Brno. (Photo: Jan Selling.)

ist regimes of Eastern Europe to collapse one by one, like dominoes or a house of cards. This opened the door to new opportunities for Romani activists and other politically active people to form independent organizations and participate in an open public debate. But it also meant that nationalist and racist forces were now unleashed.

Antigypsy violence sprung up throughout Europe, particularly in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, but this time it was met with firm counter-actions and social mobilization.[66] In some cases, Roma could count on the support of the new democratic regimes, for example, by the establishment of the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, but in other cases like Hungary, antigypsyism was an ideological cement of political forces with influence over national politics. In the former Yugoslavia, and Kosovo in particular, Roma became scapegoats for the old regimes and were subjected to massive violence.[67]

In terms of the social conditions the Roma encountered, the change brought about by the collapse of state socialism were sometimes for the better

66 Kóczé, "Movement in Hungary"; Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Mirga-Wójtowicz, "Movement in Poland"; Horvátová, "Roma in the Czech Lands."

67 Schulze, "Silenced Voices"; cf. literary composition in Lundgren and Ramadani, *Ramiz resa*.

or the worse, depending on the context. The forced assimilation programme Roma endured under Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu was discontinued, and after a delay of several years, the Czech Republic stopped the practice of forced sterilization of Romani women, which had been the policy since 1972.[68] At the same time, the social structures of state socialism were torn down, and Roma who previously had access to housing, work, and schooling lost their fragile foothold.

These changes amounted to a new set of challenges the Romani movement would need to overcome. Through alliances with local and national politicians and human rights organizations like the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the George Soros Open Society Institute (now the Open Society Foundations), Romani activists succeeded in getting Romani rights on the agenda in both the EU and the Council of Europe.

And for the first time, the situation Romani women faced also became a political issue. The issue was so new and hotly debated that the Council of Europe held a special hearing in 1995. Four years later, the Council of Europe backed a report by Romanian Romani social work researcher, Nicoleta Bitu, which has been described as the manifesto of the Romani women's movement.[69] The impetus for the budding Romani women's movement came mainly from activists in Spain (the *Gitanas* movement) and Eastern Europe, where Romani women became role models by taking parliamentary seats. According to anthropologist Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, who is currently deputy director of the European Roma Institute for Art and Culture (ERIAC) in Berlin, Spanish Romani women activists in particular took a critical stance in relation to "white feminism," and claimed what was needed at this stage was a patient increase in the awareness of Romani women.[70] But for the British National Association of Gypsy Women, founded in 1994, the most important issue was to provide support and protection to women who had been harassed by police and local authorities.[71]

At the same time, new Romani organizations like the Romanian Romani CRISS and the Hungarian European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), started

68 Forced sterilization was officially stopped towards the end of the 1990s, but another case was reported as recently as 2007. In 2005, the Czech Parliament rejected a proposal for financial compensation for those who were forcibly sterilized. Pallas, *Oanpassbara medborgare*; On May 6, 2021 the Parliament finally approved a new proposal for compensation. "Czech Bill," *Romea.cz*, 6 May 2021. Horvátová, "Roma in the Czech Lands."

69 Kóczé, "Romani Women's Movement"; Bitu, *Roma/Gypsy Women in Europe.*

70 Mirga-Kruszelnicka, "Movement in Spain."

71 Kóczé, "Romani Women's Movement."

to pursue justice through legal means. This was especially true in the fight for the right to education in public schools, which at that time was more the exception than the rule. Although a law was enacted in Bulgaria in 1992 that explicitly gave the Romani this right, the reality was much different. As it once was for the African American civil rights movement in the 1960s, desegregation became a rallying cry for Romani activists. One of the many problems was that Romani children could not attend schools outside the Romani ghettos (*mahalas*). An activist network eventually emerged in Bulgaria that arranged for large-scale school transport, which made a tremendous difference in Romani education over the long run. Legal actions were initiated against the Hungarian and Czech governments. These were followed in the 2000s by legal actions against Greece, Croatia and Romania. The Roma have won in all of these cases, which would not have been possible without European regulations establishing the rights of all citizens. [72]

Although several of the countries on the losing side of these cases have chosen to continue as if nothing happened, the legal challenges won over the years are a matter of legal emancipation that can form the basis of continued political pressure through social mobilization. In the same way, the 1995 Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities triggered a chain reaction. As individual countries signed on to the Framework Convention (or recognized Romani rights on other grounds), the Roma have been given legally binding national documents they can invoke to assert their rights. Strengthened by these rights, groups that had previously adopted a survival strategy of anonymity have now openly begun to systematically push for their cause, including Nordic Travelers (Reisende, Romani, Tater, Resande), Austrian Sinti and Roma, and Swiss Jenische. In a number of Western countries, the anti-Romani rhetoric of the past began to change. Around the turn of the millennium, governments and churches in Finland, Norway, and Sweden issued formal apologies for the historical abuses against Romani people. The 1995 murder of four Roma in Oberwart, Austria marked a turning point: for the first time, the entire government showed respect and sympathy for the group's vulnerability by attending the funeral of the four victims.[73]

Massive violence and ethnic cleansing against Roma in the former Yugoslavia in connection with the 1990s Balkan Wars triggered a stream of refugees seeking safety in Western Europe. The European region that was the

72 Barbu and Matache, "School desegregation."

73 Thurner, "Roma und Sinti-Bewegung in Österreich."

first to offer Roma a voice on state radio and television broadcasts had now become the most dangerous place in Europe for Roma. In Germany, Romani activists supported Romani asylum seekers from the very beginning, staging public protests against the threat of deportations.[74] In the late 1990s, Roma also began fleeing the Czech Republic, seeking asylum in Great Britain and Canada. The optimism that characterized the period after democratization, the so-called Velvet Revolution, had now given way to desperation in the face of dramatically deteriorating living conditions and increasingly intense anti-gypsyism. For the Czech government, this was an embarrassing stain on the country's image that had to be accounted for. The stream of refugees itself constituted a social mobilization that put pressure on the government in the country they left. In 1997, the Czech government published the Bratinka Report.[75] Much like the 1956 Swedish "Zigenare Inquiry" and the Norwegian "Tater Report" in 1980, another European government had now been forced to admit on paper that the Romani situation was unacceptable. And much like the situation in Sweden in the 1950s, the positive changes were a long time coming.

2000s: Minority Rights, Refugees, and the Begging Issue

The 1990s moved the Romani issue onto the European agenda. The discourse on historical justice forced formal apologies and compensation, especially in the Nordic countries and Germany. In a number of countries, Roma received recognition as national minorities with special rights. School segregation in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, and Greece was struck down in a number of courts. But when time came to implement these successes, it led to widespread disappointment. Many Roma, Sinti, and Travelers never received compensation for forced sterilization, removal of children, and Nazi atrocities. Nor did the good intentions of European Roma policy seem to have a meaningful impact on the daily lives of Roma, despite the constant stream of new policy recommendations and project launches. Therefore, the enthusiasm for projects like the grand Decade of Roma Inclusion, which was launched in twelve countries in 2015, was limited.[76] The frustration in response to shattered expectations led to continued Romani activism, which has been constantly seeking new forms.

74 Gress, "Sinti and Roma."
75 Horvátová, "Roma in the Czech Lands."
76 Mirga, "Roma Policy in Europe."

According to Finnish Romani political scientist Sarita Friman-Korpela, there was a division in the way activism was manifested: in the reasonably equal and wealthy social welfare states of the north, linguistic and cultural rights were high on the Romani agenda, while the push for Romani rights in post-socialist class-based societies in the southeast were about access to clean water, housing, and schooling. Friman-Korpela also raised a legitimate question about what happens if the social welfare states of the north fail.[77] And at the same time, it has become increasingly difficult for the social welfare states in the north to turn a blind eye to the inhuman social conditions the Roma face in the southeast. In the wake of the Balkan Wars, the composition of the Romani collective in Sweden changed through immigration. Romani from the Balkans, often Muslims who speak Arli, are now one of the largest Romani groups in the country. They brought with them experience of education and working in the industrial sector. Many found success in their new homeland. But they also carried traumatic memories and stories of the lives they left behind.

The refugee issue made the pan-European dimension obvious. Many found a new life in the north, but others were forced to return. Another group was again referred to the internal flight alternative in Kosovo and detained in camps containing toxic levels of lead, which were run with the help of the Norwegian Church Aid program, where they were also subjected to systematic abuse. As early as 2000, Romani activists initiated medical and chemical examinations and received the support of lawyers from the ERRC and the World Health Organization. But it was not until 2009 that Norwegian Church Aid withdrew its support. The Roma sued, but the aid organization avoided any legal responsibility, and the Roma received no compensation.[78]

Following the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU in 2007, begging and street-working people from the southeast have become increasingly common in the wealthy Nordic cities. Because mass media and right-wing populist discourse have frequently associated begging with Roma, and portrayed begging as something conditioned by Romani culture, old antigypsyist sentiments have been revived. But there has also been a discussion about identifying the causes of begging, namely, structural poverty and racism. Mainstream politics have swung back and forth between debate over the begging ban and

77 Sarita Friman-Korpela, communication to author in connection with RJ research-program application by Jan Selling 2017, "Romanies in the Nordic Context: the Dynamics of Interaction, Antigypsyism and Collective Memory Between Exclusion and Inclusion."

78 OECD National Contact Point Norway, "Initial Assessment"; cf. Schulze, "Silenced Voices."

the insight that these are people who also have rights even when they stay in the north, or seeing this racialized, Romani poverty as a responsibility for all of Europe, or alternatively, an issue that is only the responsibility of Romania and Bulgaria. Civil society has become involved through religious organizations like the Salvation Army, the Swedish City Mission, and the Church City Mission in Norway, as well as secular organizations like the Folk er folk (People are people) in Norway and the association HEM in Sweden. In Sweden, the Commission Against Antigypsyism and individual Romani activists like author and singer Hans Caldaras, former MEP Soraya Post, and lawyer Sunita Memetovic, have become especially involved in issues concerning the situation of the vulnerable EU-migrants.[79]

How long would political leaders tolerate the fact that human rights protections did not seem to apply to Roma in practice? Both international and European bodies started to acknowledge this reality and invited Roma in as equals to discuss the issue. In 1999, an important arena was created with the formation of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; originally created as an independent dialogue forum during the Cold War). Within its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), a secretariat for Romani rights was created in Warsaw, which was led by Romanian Romani activist, philosopher and sociologist Nicolae Gheorghe. The ODIHR's regular reports have since supported Romani demands for justice.

At the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism and xenophobia in Durban, a number of Romani organizations attended. This helped put the Romani situation in a global context, and at the same time, provided the impetus for North and South American Romani organizations to create an umbrella body (SKOKRA).[80] The Council of Europe had drawn attention to the situation of the Romani quite early (see above). Another big step was taken in 2001 when Finnish President Tarja Halonen invited Roma and Travellers within Europe to create an advisory group that would serve as a standing dialogue partner to the Council of Europe. This culminated in the creation of the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) in 2004, which had the capacity to unite forces from civil society that had previously worked in isolation. Within the ERTF, women activists like Ágnes Daróczi, Miranda Vuolasranta, and Soraya Post have often held leading positions since the forum was con-

79 See afterwords by Post and Caldaras and Memetovic, "Between Freedom of Expression".

80 Bernal, "Argentina and Latin America."

ceived.[81] In 2006, the European Parliament finally adopted the first resolution to draw attention to the fact that Romani women were a particularly vulnerable group within the most discriminated minority in Europe.[82] The tireless work of Romani activists and researchers had broken through yet another barrier of silence.

The ignorance of the majority society to the systematic discrimination of Romani was no longer the problem. Nor was the division in the Romani movement. On the contrary, in more and more countries, there was a well-informed and increasingly impatient population of Romani activists who would no longer abide empty promises and sluggish European and national bureaucracies.

2010s: Acknowledging Antigypsyism, LGBTQ Inclusion, and Pan-European Identity Building

Social mobilization and liberation never follow a linear path from a dark past to a promising present day and a bright future. The labor movement, women's movement, and the decolonization of the developing world show that history is rife with complications. In the 1960s, the Swedish Social Democrat Prime Minister Tage Erlander spoke of the "discontent of rising expectations" meaning that when things improve, people want things to be even better. It is this frustration with a reality that does not meet expectations that can make societal tensions boil over. Put another way, people do not rise up in revolution because they think conditions are bad for them, but because they have been cheated out of a future that had been promised to them. Modern Romani history shows us that no measure of success is given for free and that every step of the way, Roma must be prepared to defend each small victory from forces that are not prepared to accept Roma as equals. These obstacles may relate to inanimate structures that impair the prospects of Roma in the form of structural antigypsyism. It can also relate to latent, ingrained, underlying antigypsyism, which can be exploited ideologically to "justify or distract from . . . political goals,"[83] which do not even necessarily have to do with Roma. Current examples of this include right-wing populists in government positions (Orbán regime in Hungary) or opposition (Sweden Democrats). The unwillingness or inability to identify and combat antigypsyism relates to the fact that it is such

81 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."
82 Kóczé, "Romani Women's Movement."
83 Wippermann, "Longue Durée of Antiziganism."

a fundamentally ingrained part of the perceived reality and culture among white Europeans and the Anglo-Saxon world.

During the 2010s, there was a breakthrough for the acknowledgment of antigypsyism. Indeed, the term was coined by Soviet-Romani activist Alexander German already in 1928. In the 1980s, Ian Hancock wrote about Romani slavery and the Holocaust as consequences of antigypsyism. German historian Wolfgang Wippermann expanded this line of thought in the 1990s by systematically comparing antigypsyism and antisemitism. Yet it is only in the 2010s that this perspective broke through among activists, researchers and politicians. State commissions in Sweden and Germany were explicitly tasked with confronting the phenomenon known as antigypsyism. In the Swedish case, the commission was a direct response to the 2013 revelation that the police, without any legal justification, kept secret registers of 4741 Roma, 1320 of whom were children, for the sole reason that they were Roma. As in Norway 1975, investigative journalism had a fundamental impact, this time enabled through a whistleblower from within the police.[84] (The Swedish Roma registration will be elaborated more in further chapters.) In the German case, the commission was a response to the persevering demands of the Central Council of Sinti and Roma against the backdrop of the historical responsibility of Germany and European commitments for the protection of national minorities.[85] Noteworthy, the German decision for a commission was linked to the establishment of an academic institute for antigypsyism research at Heidelberg University.

A 2015 EU resolution sanctioned the term and linked it with the demand for historical justice, rehabilitation, and compensation. The term became part of the vocabulary of the European political debate and Romani activists. The democratic public is gradually being forced to accept that antigypsyism is as unacceptable and as unworthy of modern democracy as antisemitism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia, sexism, and homophobia. This is unfolding in parallel with the emergence of an international Romani academic community.

With the addition of critical theory, post-colonial studies, feminism and intersectionality, the instruments in the toolbox are being refined. A notable example is the emergence of Romani LGBTQ studies and activism in the mid-2010s.[86] Academic activists not only want to describe what they see in society, but to affect change, and they are starting to systematically challenge

84 "Över tusen barn," *Dagens Nyheter,* September 23, 2013.

85 Deutscher Bundestag, "Expertenkommission Antiziganismus."

86 Máté, "Faced with Multiple 'Values,'" 97.

established "truths" and oppressive "truth regimes" (views and descriptions of reality that are taken for granted). The dominance of "Gypsy experts" in policy making and gypsylorism in Romani studies is no longer unquestionably accepted. This is a significant step, as politicians and administrators tend to look for scientific support to help make their case.

Thus, the shift that is gradually taking place in the majority society's Romani policy corresponds with academic interventions, which challenge research perspectives that regard Roma as a societal problem and seek cultural explanations for their subordination.[87]

Slowly but surely, the understanding sinks in that Romani people are a transnational identity collective with common symbols, a linguistic repertoire, and origins (national identity without a nation), and at the same time, a multicultural spectrum consisting of many different groups with different identities and different viewpoints within each group. Roma stand behind the Romani flag as a collective force, but at the same time, Roma are a diverse people with different opinions, interests, and experiences. True political inclusion cannot simply mean consulting a Romani person for the sake of formality then continuing with a policy that is shaped on the basis of the interests of the majority society. To paraphrase Karl Marx: the emancipation of the Romani people must be conquered by the Romani people themselves.[88]

Excursus: "The Gypsy clause": Jeanne Marie Czardas' Victory against the Norwegian State

Since 1915, the Norwegian state had explicitly denied "sigøynere" ("Gypsies") entry to the kingdom. In practice, Norwegian Roma were also denied a Norwegian passport, the stated purpose of which was to ensure they could be deported, or not allowed to re-enter Norway. This racially motivated legislation, often referred to as the "Gypsy clause" (*sigøynerparagrafen*), remained in force until 1956, two years after the Swedish equivalent was abolished. The decisive event that would ultimately end the "Gypsy clause" was the case of the deportation of Jeanne Czardas Josef in 1955.

87 E.g., in pedagogical research: Lauritzen and Nodeland, "What is the Problem?"

88 The original quote reads: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." https://www.marxists.org/history/international/iwma/documents/1867/rules.htm.

The legislators' intentions in writing the clause had succeeded to such an extent that Norway became "Gypsy-free" in 1934 when an entourage of 66 Norwegian Roma who had been abroad were refused entry into the country with the help of the Swedish and Danish border police. Sixty-two members of this entourage lost their lives in the Nazi extermination camps.[89] It was not until 1954 that two of the survivors, Czardas Josef and his wife Dika Jeanne, managed to return to the country and were finally allowed to stay by proving that they were Norwegian citizens. When they planned to celebrate a wedding in 1955, visiting wedding guests from France were turned away by the border police in the port of Oslo.[90] The course of events that followed showed that the "Gypsy clause" no longer aligned with the public's sense of justice. The press, which often generated stories characterized by racial biological views of the Roma and pushed for stricter compliance with the "Gypsy clause" before the war reversed course.[91] Racist statements by the senior police officer in connection with the rejection of the wedding guests received a great deal of negative attention in the press. The newspaper *Dagbladet* did not mince words: "as long as the 'Gypsy clause' is not abolished, Norway should refrain from criticizing "racial discrimination elsewhere in the world."[92]

The matter soon came to a head. As the police monitored a member of the Josef family during the deportation operation in June, they became aware that there were more Roma in the country. On July 13, the police conducted a raid and escorted 14 people away by truck, who were then put on a boat bound for Antwerp. Among those rounded up were Josef's daughter Jeanne and her children. Families had been torn apart. *Arbeiderbladet* wrote about the heart-wrenching scenes at the quay: "Grief and pain in scenes that you would expect to see in other countries but hoped to never see in Norway."[93] Josef managed to hire a lawyer to have the deportation declared unlawful. Thanks to the editor of *Dagbladet*, Helge Seip, the situation became a symbolic issue in the press that

89 Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, "*Å bli dem kvit*."
90 Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, "*Å bli dem kvit,*" 156–157.
91 Lien, "Pressens dekning."
92 *Dagbladet*, June 9, 1955. Quoted in Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, "*Å bli dem kvit*," 157.
93 *Arbeiderbladet*, July 16, 1955. Quoted in Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, "*Å bli dem kvit*,"158.

was not so much about the Roma as about humanism and the little guy's struggle against the state. Czardas won in court despite the fact that the Ministry of Justice and Public Security continued to defend the "Gypsy clause." The Supreme Court of Norway found that Jeanne Czardas Josef was a Norwegian citizen and that the "Gypsy clause" could not be used as a means to supersede her civil rights. For the first time, the state was required to readmit a wrongfully deported person, Jeanne Czardas Josef. *Morgenbladet* described it as: "reassuring that the . . . judicial system is strong enough to even slap down the state."[94]

As a result of Czardas' case, the "Gypsy clause" was struck from the Norwegian Aliens Act in January 1956. But it was another 20 years before everyone involved in the case regained their Norwegian citizenship.

94 *Morgenbladet*, July 27, 1955. Quoted in Lien, "Pressens dekning," 100.

Chapter 2

Romani Politics for Historical Justice and the Fight Against Antigypsyism

Given the re-emergence of antigypsyism across Europe, it is imperative that political countermeasures are explored to combat this trend. This was the impetus for the gathering of a large number of politicians and Romani leaders at a major international conference in Berlin in 2016, Confronting Antigypsyism: The Role of Political Leaders in Countering Discrimination, Racism, Hate Crime and Violence against Roma and Sinti Communities.[1] Antigypsyism was thus acknowledged as a critical present-day problem that needs to be confronted immediately. It is therefore interesting that the consensus among conference attendees was that the antidote to this problem was to look back at the past by raising public awareness of history, antigypsyism, and the Romani Holocaust. In this chapter, I will explore the reasoning behind this approach.

This chapter sets out to provide a more in-depth understanding of Romani discourses on historical justice, the politics of collective memory, and strategies to counter antigypsyism. The connections between these three subjects can be understood by adapting the concept of collective memory, which says that within each society, memories function as frameworks for both national identities and the identities of different groups.

All such collective identities are based on particularist understandings of history, which unite a group's or a nation's understanding of its origin and development over time.[2] These conceptions of history are selective: certain aspects are given special importance while others are ignored. They are social constructions that provide a foundation upon which individuals can build self-identifications (like "Swedish" or "Romani," "Swedish and Romani," "Swedish

1 The conference was organised by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. (ODIHR, "Annual Report 2016," 37–38; Selling, "Summary Report.")

2 Particularist in this context refers to something specific to a particular social, political, and ethnically defined group.

Roma," "Tater/Romani and Norwegian," "Resande and Roma," etc.) and serve to strengthen the shared identities of groups or nations. These normative identities thus simultaneously decide who is inside the collective and those who are considered strangers.[3] Such collective identities are expressions of power relations and change over time. They are constantly renegotiated and challenged. They are both a reflection of society and a catalyst for societal change.

The term "historical justice" is used here in a broad sense to describe discourses about material redress, compensation, and indemnity, as well as immaterial political gestures, including historical rectification, state commissions of inquiry, and official apologies.[4] This is all closely tied to commemoration politics: campaigns, actions and advocacy around sites of memory, what Nora calls *lieux de mémoire*.[5] Commemoration politics often center around the erection (or transformation) of symbolic memorials on historic sites, or on symbolically important sites. But commemoration politics can also be about establishing (or reinterpreting) commemorative days that refer to specific events or to signify the importance of the nation or group.[6]

This chapter also explores some expressions of the Romani struggle against antigypsyism in culture, politics, and scholarship, as well as in state and international initiatives. I will provide examples from a number of countries that were thematized at RomArchive in the section on the Romani civil rights struggle, but the main focus here will be the discourses in Finland, Germany, Norway, and Sweden. The reason I choose to narrow my focus in this way is that during my work as a curator of the RomArchive, I was responsible for material relating to these countries. This chapter therefore does not intend to provide a complete overview but to offer a resource for reflection and comparison when reading material about various countries.

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3 See Greenfield, *Five Roads to Modernity*, 7–9, 14–17: "National identity in its distinctive modern sense is … an identity which [*sic*] derives from membership in a 'people,' the fundamental characteristic of which is that it is defined as a 'nation.' Every member of the 'people' thus interpreted partakes in its superior, elite quality and … a stratified national population is perceived as essentially homogeneous … lines of status and class as superficial."

4 This definition goes further than the narrower term "transitional justice," which mainly deals with legal and institutional processes such as criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs and institutional reforms in the transition from one system to another. The concept "historical justice" also includes discourses on historical, collective memory. Neumann and Thompson, *Historical Justice and Memory*; cf. Selling, *Aus den Schatten*.

5 Commemoration politics are how a society politically negotiates how and to what extent the past should be remembered. Selling, *Aus den Schatten*; Sites of memory are places that symbolize the past. See Nora, "Between Memory and History."

6 The relationship between memory, identity and communities of memory is explored in Selling, *Aus den Schatten*. Cf. Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, 48–83.

Historical Justice

In his keynote speech at the 2013 international conference in Uppsala "Antiziganism—What's in a Word?" Ian Hancock addressed an aspect of the Romani historical experience that is often forgotten:

> ...the psychological damage that persecution [of Romani people] has brought with it—not just the fear Roma live with daily in too many places, fear that affects both mental and physical health, but the deeper psychological damage that history has wrought. I don't believe that any attention has been paid to this at all ...[7]

Hancock was specifically addressing the fact that Romani people in southeastern Europe were historically denied their human dignity and autonomy for more than 500 years of slavery, the effects of which still resonate in the collective memory today.[8] Hancock pointed to the process of rectification itself as a necessary exercise for the recognition of Romani people as the subjects and agents of their own history. This can be compared with what German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno wrote in 1963 concerning the aftermath of German fascism—confrontation of the past must always be linked to societal change.[9]

In the previous chapter, I provided several examples of how history has shaped the present. Since the Nazi persecution and genocide of Roma and Sinti between 1933 and 1945, demands for rectification and restitution have played a major role in shaping the German Sinti and Roma civil rights movement.[10] These were also central issues inside the intellectual circle in Paris in the 1950s that paved the way for the international Romani movement.[11] In Hungary, demands for recognition of the Nazi persecution of Romani became a contested cultural policy issue in the 1980s.[12] Roma in Yugoslavia benefited from their participation in the partisan movement's fight for liberation from fascism and occupation. It was against this background that Anti-fascist Žarko Jovanović performed his song "Djelem Djelem" on Yugoslav radio in

7 Hancock, "Keynote."
8 Hancock referenced DeGruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. See also Hancock, *The Pariah Syndrome*; Hancock, *We Are the Romani People*.
9 Adorno, "Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit."
10 Selling, "Romani Rose. Interview."
11 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."
12 Kóczé, "Roma Movement Hungary."

1949, which many years later became the international Romani anthem.[13] In the song, Jovanović describes the fascists as "the black legion."

In other parts of Eastern Europe, these discourses could only evolve after the end of state socialism. In Poland, the first political Romani organization was registered in 1991, in the city that has come to symbolize the Nazi genocide more than any other, Oświęcim (the Polish name for Auschwitz). The organization, Stowarzyszenie Romów w Polsce (Association of Roma in Poland), was engaged in issues relating to the continued discrimination of Roma but also took an active part in shaping the Holocaust remembrance events in Auschwitz.[14] In Czechoslovakia, the short-lived period of relatively moderate, progressive policies towards Roma led to the establishment of the Brno Museum for Romani Culture in 1991. That same year, a law was passed that provided compensation for some categories of Roma persecuted under Nazi rule. The Brno Museum offered assistance to applicants seeking compensation, which in most cases, however, proved unsuccessful.[15] The memory of the Holocaust had been suppressed in the state socialist system, especially the genocide of Roma. The most flagrant example of this willful ignorance came in the 1970s, when a pig farm was built in the vicinity of the site of the former concentration camp for Roma, Lety. After several years of struggle and political pressure by Romani activists and advocates from within the Czech Republic and abroad, the government finally conceded to mounting pressure and agreed to buy the pig farm in 2017, which was demolished and transformed into a memorial site.[16]

The international Romani dimension of the Holocaust means that recognition and remembrance have increasingly become a universal experience and reference point for Romani identity, which transcends the boundaries of subgroup identities and national identities. In 1985 and 1986, Romani delegations from Canada, Great Britain, and the United States lodged a protest against the absence of Romani representation in the United States Holocaust Memorial Council and the planned Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. The protest was eventually successful, and in 1997, Ian Hancock was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the Romani representative in the council.[17]

Little by little, the commemoration of the Romani Holocaust victims is being acknowledged as a historical responsibility that needs to be addressed by

13 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."
14 Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Mirga-Wójtowicz, "Roma Movement in Poland."
15 Horváthová, "Roma in the Czech Lands."
16 Horváthová, "Roma in the Czech Lands"; "Demolition of Pig Farm," *Romea.cz*.
17 Lee, "Canada and the USA."

European nations and the European Union as a whole. In 2015, the European Parliament adopted the resolution "On the Occasion of International Roma Day—Antigypsyism in Europe and EU Recognition of the Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide During World War II."[18] Through this resolution, the memory of the Holocaust was linked to the need to root out and combat antigypsyism. However, the resolution represents a commitment that is still far from the reality in most member states: recognizing the lasting effects of antigypsyism, condemning ". . . utterly and without equivocation all forms of racism and discrimination faced by the Roma, and . . . the need for antigypsyism to be effectively addressed."[19]

The history of the Romani rights struggle in Finland, Norway, and Sweden shows that the recognition of, and compensation also for non-Nazi state-sponsored antigypsyism like sterilization, forced removal of children, forced assimilation, and ethnic profiling, also play a significant role in the renegotiation of relationships between Romani people and the majority societies, as well as in the construction of Romani identity.[20]

Commissions of Inquiry

The appointment of a commission of inquiry is usually the first, and often only, step a state takes to turn the microscope on an insidious societal problem, before the door is closed on the issue or it continues further into a political decision-making process. These commissions carry a lot of weight and are well positioned to put complex processes into motion, such as the fight for historical justice. To date, Romani rights and the confrontation of antigypsyism have only been granted this level of priority in a few countries. I will provide examples below.

Norway

In 1975, the Government appointed a committee to evaluate the then still ongoing forced assimilation of Tater/Romani (Reisende, Norwegian Travelers). The state had outsourced the work under this policy to the Christian organi-

18 The resolution was adopted April 15, 2015. On the same day, the European Parliament also adopted a resolution commemorating the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire 1915–1917. European Parliament, resolutions 2015/2615(RSP) and 2015/2590 (RSP).

19 European Parliament, Resolution 2015/2615 (RSP).

20 Stenroos, "Movement in Finland"; Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay"; Selling, "Sweden. Narrative Essay." See also Soraya Post, statement at the 2013 White Paper Ceremony, Post "Comments".

zation Norsk misjon blant hjemløse, which operated forced labor camps and orphanages to deprogramme Tater/Romani. The committee presented its final report in 1980, revealing a history of systematic abuse, forced sterilizations, and lobotomies. The report recommended that the policies be dismantled and that state contracts with the Norsk misjon blant hjemløse be suspended.[21]

In 2009, many Romani activists felt that there were still unanswered questions about this brutal period of Norwegianization. Some felt that there was still a long way to go before reconciliation could be achieved. This was articulated in an open letter to the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, which was signed by several key actors in the activist movement, including Taternes Landsforening (the Tater Organization of Norway) and Landsorganisasjonen for Romanifolket (the National Organization for the Romani).[22] The statement called for a truth commission that could evaluate the abuses inflicted upon the Tater/Romani. A truth commission would have involved court-like hearings for those responsible for the abuses (without legal penalties), but the government decided against it. Instead, the government appointed a commission tasked with investigating policies implemented from 1850 to 2015. The commission's final report concluded that the policies had been a failure and had a negative impact.[23]

Sweden

Since the recognition of the Roma as a national minority in 1999, a number of investigations have been carried out. In these, Roma have been consulted or participated in other ways. The most comprehensive of these investigations was conducted by the Delegation for Roma Issues from 2006 to 2010. In its final report the delegation stated that persistent discrimination of Roma was related to structural antigypsyism and deeply rooted prejudices at all levels of society.[24] Mirroring the demands raised in the Norwegian discourse, the delegation concluded that the Swedish history of antigypsyism must be further explored by a truth commission and the issue of material compensation should be examined.[25] The new center-right government presented an inclusion strategy in 2011 but rejected the idea of a truth commission and material com-

21 NOU 1980:42, *Omstreiferne*, 105.
22 Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay"; Falstadseminariet, "Uttalelse."
23 NOU 2015:7, *Assimilering og motstand*.
24 SOU 2010:55, *Romers rätt*.
25 SOU 2010:55, *Romers rätt*; The proposal was based on the delegation's investigation by Ericson, "Sanningskommission."

pensation. The government instead produced a White Paper on "The Dark Unknown History," which documented experiences of the victims of antigypsyism in twentieth-century Sweden.[26] This decision was widely criticized, particularly by representatives of the Resande people and members of the delegation who argued that the White Paper's mandate was too limited in scope and did not serve the same purpose as an independent review commission.[27] The author of Resande history, Bo Hazell, said that it was ethically questionable that a ministry would be internally commissioned to write the White Paper: "Instead, a truth commission would have been able to work independently if consisting of representatives of various political parties, human rights organizations, historians, other researchers and experts, and—above all—representatives of Resande and [other] Roma."[28] (See chapter 6.)

Shortly before the White Paper was launched in 2014, a Commission against Antigypsyism was installed, partly as a response to this criticism, which escalated after the revelation that the police were still keeping ethnic registers of Roma. In contrast to the White Paper, the commission addressed the ongoing antigypsyism, in particular the illegal police actions and the public discourse against begging people from Eastern Europe.[29] (See chapter 6.) Also, in 2014, the National Board of Health and Welfare published an independent report entitled *Antiziganism i statlig tjänst* (Antigypsyism in government services). This report was focused on the National Board of Health and Welfare's role in the abuses against Resande and other Roma, namely, forced sterilizations and forced removal of children. The report also acknowledged that Romani people were still subject to widespread discrimination in their encounters with social welfare authorities.[30]

The Living History Forum has also published several reports and teaching materials on antigypsyism and the Nazi genocide of the Roma.[31] And in 2000, the Church of Sweden published a self-critical report on its antigypsyist history and the need for reconciliation, which was a first for the organiza-

26 Regeringskansliet, *Vitbok*.

27 Including Charles Westin, Hans Caldaras, Soraya Post, and Domino Kai. Cf. Selling, *Svensk Antiziganism*, 173. See also statements from the research network RORHIN (Romers och resandes historia i Norden) which included Romani researchers and activists who advocated for following the Norwegian model: Andersson et al., "Dags att göra upp"; Uppsala University, "Forskarnätverk"; Lundqvist et al., "Regeringens vitbok."

28 Hazell, "Sanningskommission".

29 SOU 2016:44, *Kraftsamling mot antiziganism*.

30 Westin, N. et al., eds., *Antiziganism i statlig tjänst*.

31 Lindgren, *Romers kulturella och språkliga rättigheter*; Lundgren and Taikon, *Sofia Z-4515*; Jansson and Schmid eds., *Ett fördrivet folk*.

tion.[32] This was followed up in 2015 by a more detailed report on the church's role in the exclusion policy directed against Resande and other Roma from 1900 to 1950. The church's historical policies amounted to active discrimination against Romani people in its own activities and through the power the church held in Sweden's localities to perform population registration: individual priests could make decisions on a Romani's right of residence.[33]

Germany

In 2014, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma urged the German Bundestag to install an independent expert commission on antigypsyism.[34] The proposal ultimately received official backing at the above-mentioned conference in Berlin in 2016 with the support of Germany's Minister of State for Europe, Michael Roth, and Federal Vice President of German Parliament, Claudia Roth, as well as Gabriela Hrabaňová, policy coordinator for European Roma Grassroots. The Norwegian and Swedish commissions were singled out as models for what should be implemented in other countries.[35] In 2018, the German government finally gave the go ahead for an independent expert commission on antigypsyism, which conducted its work 2019–2021.[36] The main conclusions of the report were that "antigypsyism constitutes a massive problem for society as a whole,"[37] and that a change of strategy is urgently needed, the latter being most pronouncedly framed in a recommendation for the European level: to implement binding directives for the combatting of antigypsyism in all policy areas. The structural dimension of antigypsyism was stressed. For the German context, a truth commission was demanded for investigating post-World War Two persecution of Sinti and Roma. The report also demanded a stop of deportations of Romani refugees and measures to end the precarious situation of Romani persons living in Germany with unclear status.

Switzerland

In presenting the cases above from Scandinavia and Germany, mention must also be made of the extraordinary example of the Swiss independent expert commission on policies regarding Roma, Sinti, and Jenische before, during,

32 Fogelberg, *Ja Devlesa!*.
33 Ohlsson Al Fakir, *Svenska Kyrkans*. Cf. Selling, *Svensk Antiziganism*.
34 Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma, "Fragenkatalog."
35 Selling, "Summary Report." Cf. OSCE, "Sweden's Good Practices."
36 Deutscher Bundestag, "Expertenkommission Antiziganismus."
37 Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte, "Pressemitteilung 03.06.2021."

and after World War Two.[38] It gave an historical account of the antigypsyist policies and practices of the Swiss state, but also uncovered the antigypsyism of the Interpol predecessor, the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), between 1934 and 1945. It also revealed the historical actions of the ICPC in the "fight against the Gypsy plague," where it sought to create a central European register of "Gypsies" and "people who live like Gypsies."[39] The ICPC did not single out any other ethnic group with the same criminal stigma. The Swiss report revealed that there was a consensus among the national police authorities in favor of this policy. Neglecting the fact that the ICPC increasingly came under the influence of Hitler's Germany, Western powers cooperated in the implementation of this policy until the war broke out and neutral states, such as Sweden and Switzerland, until 1945. The Swedish representative was the founder of the early Statens kriminaltekniska anstalt (State Forensic Science Institute and predecessor to the Swedish National Forensic Center), Harry Söderman. Neither Interpol nor the Swedish Police Authority has taken any steps to address this history of Nazi collaboration and antigypsyism.[40]

Official Apologies and Recognition

Perhaps the biggest step in the history of Romani emancipation has been the recognition of the group as political subjects. This is particularly evident in the recognition of Romani people as national minorities in a number of countries during the 1990s. An equally significant step is the recognition of the unique disadvantages the group has endured as a result of antigypsyism and the political recognition of this history, for example, in the issuance of public apologies, whereby the majority society assumes historical responsibility and at the same time includes the minority in a shared collective memory.

Finland

In 1956, a permanent Roma Advisory Board (today RONK) had already been created in Finland, which was directed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and

38 Jenische are a non-Romani group of Travelers based mainly in France, Austria and Switzerland.

39 Huonker, *Unabhängige Expertenkommission Schweiz*. See also Huonker's website: www.thata.ch.

40 Huonker, *Unabhängige Expertenkommission Schweiz*; Deflem, "Logic of Nazification"; Selling, "The Obscured Story." Statens kriminaltekniska changed its name to Statens kriminaltekniska laboratorium in 1964 and has been known as Nationellt forensiskt centrum (Swedish National Forensic Center) since 2015.

Health. But in reality, the delegation was an instrument of the majority society's Romani assimilation policy. The Advisory Board was strongly influenced by the *Zigenarmissionen* (the "Gypsy mission," a Christian mission that received state funding), while Romani representatives would not be included until many years after the delegation was formed. With the advent of the Romani civil rights struggle of the 1960s, the direction and makeup of the delegation changed, and it is now known as the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs.[41] The board has gradually developed into a forum for dialogue between Roma and society at large.[42] Through an amendment to the Finnish Constitution in 1995, Roma, Sami, and other groups were recognized as national minorities. Among other things, this recognition ensured the right to the minority language and culture.[43] That same year, a representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland formally apologized for the church's historical discrimination of Finnish Roma. As with the Church of Norway, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was complicit in the forced assimilation of Roma through the "Gypsy mission," which was carried out in Finland in particular through the forced removal of children, with the aim of wiping out their Romani cultural identity.[44] The church's apology gained official weight when the archbishop recited a benediction in Romani in a subsequent ceremony.[45]

Germany

Sinti and Roma were recognized as a German national minority in 1995. The process started in 1979, when German Sinti and Roma civil rights activists engaged in a systematic campaign to inform the media and the German public about the Nazi genocide and continued discrimination. In 1982, several Sinti and Roma associations would unite to form the umbrella organization Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma). That same year, another significant threshold was crossed when the West German Chancellor acknowledged the genocide of Sinti and Roma for the first time. The Federal Chancellor declared, "The NS-Dictatorship inflicted grave injustice upon the Sinti and Roma. They were persecuted for

41 Today, half of the delegation consists of Romani representatives (website: www.romani.fi).
42 Friman-Korpela, "Den finskromska politikens," 226–251.
43 Minority rights group: https://minorityrights.org/minorities/roma-6/.
44 Stenroos, "Movement in Finland."
45 Thurfjell, *Faith and Revivalism*, 35; Sveriges Radio, "Få församlingar."

racial reasons. These crimes have the characteristics of a genocide."[46] In 1997, President Roman Herzog expanded this recognition at the opening of the permanent exhibition at the Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg:

> The Roma Genocide was perpetrated for the same motive of race ideology, with the same intention and with the same goal of methodical and final extermination as the Genocide of the Jews. They were murdered systematically and in families from the toddler to the aged in the whole sphere of influence of the National Socialists.[47]

Norway

The Tater/Romani and the (mainly Vlach) Roma were recognized as separate national minorities in 1998. The persistent political pressure from activists within the community of Tater/Romani led the Norwegian government and church to issue an official apology the same year. Two years later, the Church of Norway issued a revised apology, which stated its apology in more precise terms.[48]

Further, on International Romani Day in 2015, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg also apologized to the Roma for the Norwegian state's historical policies, and above all, the "Gypsy clause," which explicitly denied "Gypsies and other vagrants" entry to Norway until 1956. She said, "I apologize for the racist policy of exclusion that was pursued in the decades before and after the Second World War. I also apologize for the fatal consequences that this policy had for Norwegian Roma during the Holocaust…"[49]

According to Norwegian historian Vidar Fagerheim-Kalsås, the Prime Minister's speech can be seen as recognition that Norway's exclusionary alien policy can be directly linked to the deaths of Roma who fell victim to Nazi Germany's extermination policy. The apology was largely driven by Norwegian Roma representatives who were able to bolster their case by citing current research.[50] This process of recognition has been spearheaded by Roma activists

46 Deutsche Bundesregierung. "Pressemitteilung," March 17, 1982.

47 Translation of quote from https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-genocide/virtual-library/-/asset_publisher/M35KN9VVoZTe/content/georgia-recognition-of-the-genocide?inheritRedirect=false.

48 Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay."

49 Regjeringen.no, "Speech by Prime Minister," April 8, 2015.

50 Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay"; See also Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, "Å bli dem kvit". Rosvoll and Bielenberg, *Antisiganisme*; Kaveh, "Antiziganism in Norway."

who represent a small ethnic minority of only a few hundred people in Norway, and relates not only to historiography but also to the ongoing antigypsyism in Norwegian society. It is important to note, however, that the Norwegian, unlike the Swedish parliament, applied a very narrow definition when deciding who actually belongs to this Roma group: in practice, only descendants of the group of Roma who immigrated in the nineteenth century are included.[51] This means that many groups are excluded from the dialogue between Roma and Norwegian society, such as Roma of Russian descent, Romani refugees from the Balkans, Finnish and Swedish Roma, and Romani EU migrants.

In 2015, Norwegian Tater/Romani also received an apology from Kirkens Sosialtjeneste (the social service of the church, now called CRUX), the successor to the Norsk misjon blant hjemløse: "We took over [1987] all assets, operations and liabilities from them. The connection between the Stiftelsen Kirkens Sosialtjeneste and the Misjonen means that we now bear a moral responsibility for what happened during the Misjonen's era." [52] The apology describes how the Misjonen systematically deprived Tater/Romani of their human dignity, their culture, and their right to exist as families and independent ethnic groups. Kirkens Sosialtjeneste also took a moral responsibility for the Misjonen's role in forced sterilizations and forced removal of children. However, the apology makes no mention of the forced lobotomization of Tater/Romani.[53] The apology was published the same day as the report from the Norwegian state's public inquiry into abuses against Tater/Romani, 1850–2015, and was allegedly prepared in cooperation with representatives from the groups. However, the apology has been strongly criticized by Romani organizations. They point out that the CRUX is hiding behind a changing name, and that it should take juridical, not only moral responsibility for the persecution carried out by "the mission."[54]

Sweden

In 1999, the Roma, including the Resande, were recognized as national minority.[55] In 2000, the Swedish government officially apologized for the historical

51 Stortinget, "Stortingsmelding nr 15," 41.

52 The CRUX Foundation, the successor to the social services of the Church, published the apology on 1 June 2015 on its website: "Kirkens Sosialtjeneste beklager på det sterkeste," https://stiftelsencrux.no/om-crux/aktueltsaker/kirkens-sosialtjeneste-beklager-pa-det-sterkeste (retrieved January 2019).

53 Cf. the debate article by chairman of the HL Center in Oslo: Aukrust, "Overgrepet mot taterne."

54 Støen, "Crux."

55 Sveriges riksdag, "Regeringens proposition 1998/99:143."

persecution and discrimination of the Resande people.[56] In the same year, the Swedish archbishop officially stated that the Church's historical treatment of Roma had made a reconciliation process necessary.[57] The work to implement this process was sluggish, but in February 2013, the Church of Sweden held a service in Swedish Romani for the first time.[58]

In 2011, the Chairman of the Swedish Riksdag apologized to the victims of abuse under the state's forced child removal policy.[59] However, he was subsequently criticized for failing to acknowledge the racist bias, i.e., the overrepresentation of Resande among the victims of these practices. This had also been neglected in the state investigations on which the apology was based, which was sharply criticized in an open letter to the government:

> There is a significant component of racism in the decision-making process that led to a very large proportion of the child placements for conditions of neglect, which took place during most of the 20th century. This ethnic aspect has not been taken up by the Inquiry on Child Abuse and Neglect. Neither has it been considered by the Rectification Inquiry and the Compensation Inquiry. In fact, neglected children from Resande families are still significantly overrepresented in the group of [publicly] neglected children as a whole.[60]

The letter received no comment from the government. It is possible that the letter contributed to the fact that the issue was highlighted in the White Paper, but since the White Paper only referenced abuses in the twentieth century, the state did not take a self-critical approach on the fact that the recent inquiries had ignored the antigypsyist context. Thus, the inquiries did not result in any specific compensation or official apology for the Resande.

Shortly after the revelation of the police Roma registers in 2013, the Minister of Justice officially apologized, but the apology failed to acknowledge that the register was a clear example of ethnic profiling.[61] However, after the Parliamentary Ombudsman stated in 2015 that the register has "in fact

56 Hjelm Wallén and Engqvist, "Vi ber om ursäkt."
57 Hammar, "Lättare packning—men hur?" See also Hazell, *Resandefolket*, 606; Church of Sweden, *Inkludering och försoning*, 8.
58 Sveriges Radio, "Få församlingar," December 17, 2013.
59 Swedish Riksdag, "Talman Per Westerberg."
60 Kulturgruppen för resandefolket et al., "Öppet brev till regeringen."
61 "Ask: Å Sveriges vägnar," *Dagens Nyheter*, September 25, 2013.

acquired the character of a register of ethnicity," and under mounting pressure from the Swedish Commission Against Antigypsyism, National Police Chief Dan Eliasson finally issued a public apology.[62]

The Vatican

During a visit to Romania on May 31, 2019, Pope Francis apologized to the Roma, for "all those times in history when we have discriminated, mistreated or looked askance at you."[63] The apology was made in a small church in a Romani area in the town of Blaj. The apology received a great deal of attention and was portrayed in the media as a courageous, and in the eyes of Roma welcome, critique of the right-wing populist Italian government's policies against the Roma. However, from a political standpoint, the apology was a bit feeble, as the Romani-American scholar Ioanida Costache pointed out: firstly, no concrete offences were mentioned, and secondly, forgiveness was prescribed as the true Christian way.[64] According to Costache, the apology ceremony was therefore a display of power that did not oblige the majority society or the church to take any concrete actions, while depriving Romani of the right to feel anger over past oppression and persecution. In particular, Costache criticized the Pope for passing up the opportunity to put a name to the suffering of Roma during the Holocaust and under slavery, and the fact that the Romanian Orthodox Church still failed to apologize for its history of enslaving Roma.[65]

Restitution, Reparations, and Compensation

Acknowledgments and apologies are important symbolic gestures that can be hard enough to achieve. However, the material dimension of historical justice is about determining liability and damages. In the history of Romani liberation, this dimension has generally proved to be both politically and legally difficult to achieve.

62 The Parliamentary Ombudsman's statement came on March 17, 2015, Eliasson's apology in *Dagens Nyheter* on May 8, 2015.

63 "Pope asks forgiveness," *Reuters*, February 7, 2019.

64 A similar criticism had been directed at the rhetoric in Swedish Archbishop Hammar's aforementioned apology in 2000. Selling, *Svensk Antiziganism,* 161–163.

65 Costache, "Beyond Excuses."

Germany

Perhaps the most important issue for the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma at the time the organization was founded in 1982 was that many Sinti and Roma were still denied the right to compensation for the persecution they suffered under Nazi rule. According to a decision of the West German Federal Constitutional Court in 1956, the persecution of Sinti and Roma had not been racially motivated but occurred because they were branded as socially deviant.[66] The newly launched Central Council reopened 3500 previously rejected applications. The court's 1956 decision was overturned, making a fundamental change to the discriminatory system of compensation.[67] In the early 2000s, the Central Council successfully negotiated an agreement on compensation for Sinti and Roma who were exploited for slave labor during Nazi rule. Compensation was paid by the German federal organization Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft (Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future) and Schweizer Fondsverbandes (Swiss Funds Association). These organizations, in turn, had collected funds from companies and banks that profited from slave labor during Nazi rule. For the first time, non-German Roma were also given the opportunity to receive compensation, though the amount offered was quite small.

Norway

In the early 2000s, symbolic apologies were accompanied by individual compensation to Tater/Romani that suffered under the state's policies.[68] A decision was also made on collective compensation. This consisted partly of funding for a permanent exhibition dedicated to Tater/Romani at the Glomdal Museum in Elverum, and partly a fund for the development of Tater/Romani culture and education about the group.[69]

In 2016, the Storting also decided to provide collective material compensation to the Roma minority by financing a permanent cultural and knowledge resource center.[70] This was a result of Romani political pressure. In order to be

66 Wippermann, *Auserwählte Opfer?*, 60. See also: Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma, "Pressemitteilung, Projekte: Aufarbeitung."

67 Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma, "Entschädigung und NS-Verfahren."

68 Stortinget, "Stortingsmelding nr 44."

69 Stortinget, "Stortingsmelding nr 15," 5; Stortinget, "Stortingsmelding nr 44," 45.

70 Regjeringen.no, "Stadsbudsjettet 2017"; Stortinget, "Stadsbudsjettet for 2017."

heard, earlier in the year all the central actors of the Roma in Norway gathered at the HL-Senteret in Oslo (The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies) to form Det romske rådet (the Roma Council). The council functions as a dialogue forum between different families within the Roma national minority. It also has an overarching mission to ensure Romani participation in issues concerning Roma in Norway and to create unity within the minority.[71] Finally, the Romano kher Romani center opened in Oslo in January 2018. The center, which is staffed by both Romani and non-Romani employees, serves as a hub and gathering place that advises the greater Romani group but also offers information and lectures to, for example, students, teachers, and schoolchildren. The concept has been developed by representatives of the Roma community in collaboration with the Church City Mission.[72]

Sweden

Between 1999 and 2002, victims of forced sterilization were able to apply for financial compensation.[73] Between 2013 and 2014, victims of abuse in connection with the forced removal of children had a corresponding opportunity to apply for compensation.[74] However, none of the decisions considered the racial dimension that Resande as well as other Roma were overrepresented among those who were abused and were explicitly targeted as a matter of policy. There are therefore no official statistics on how many Resande or other Roma received compensation under these programmes.

Through a decision by the Chancellor of Justice in 2014, almost 3000 Roma were granted SEK 5000 per person as compensation for the illegal registration of their names and other information by police. However, the Chancellor of Justice stopped short of labelling the act ethnic discrimination.[75] Since the decision was considered unsatisfactory, it was challenged in court by eleven Roma with the support of the organization Civil Rights Defenders. The Stockholm District Court ultimately ruled in favor of the Roma. The ruling declared that the registers were the result of ethnic discrimination and that individual compensation would amount to SEK 30,000.[76]

71 "Stiftet romsk råd," *Dagsavisen*, March 11, 2016. See also the Roma Council's Facebook page.
72 See website Kirkens Bymisjon, "Romano Kher".
73 Socialdepartementet, "Lag (1999:332) om ersättning."
74 Sveriges Riksdag, "Ersättning av staten."
75 Justitiekanslern, "Skadeståndsanspråk."
76 Stockholms Tingsrätt, "Staten får betala."

Commemoration Politics

Physical memorial sites, commemoration days, and rituals are core manifestations of collective memory. Memorial sites and memorial days have several dimensions: They refer to specific historical events, but also to the political history behind the events and to the political process that led to the establishment of the memorial site or commemoration day itself.

14. Memorial at the Auschwitz crematorium. (Photo: Vinzenz Rose.)

Holocaust Remembrance

Every year on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed. This day was chosen as it was first introduced in Germany as a commemoration day for the victims of National Socialism, and in 2005, the UN declared it Holocaust Remembrance Day.[77]

77 United Nations, "General Assembly declared."

A European Parliament resolution in 2015 recognized August 2 as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, in memoriam of the "liquidation" of the "Gypsy family camp" in Auschwitz on the night of August 2–3, 1944. Roma Resistance Day, May 16, is the date unofficially dedicated to commemorating the revolt of Roma and Sinti in Auschwitz against the first attempt to "liquidate" the camp. These three dates mark the commemoration of Romani Holocaust victims in different manifestations and ceremonies at many places around the world. The most important are the memorial site at the Auschwitz crematorium and Berlin's Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism, which was erected outside the German parliament in 2015 after more than a decade of debate.[78] The fact that the Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti is only recently attracting the attention it deserves is likely due to a historical lack of public awareness and a lack of acceptance. It was not until 2014 that the Swedish Living History Forum considered the time ripe to highlight Romani history on Holocaust Remembrance Day. And it was not until September 2019 that the Oslo City Council decided to erect a memorial dedicated to the Norwegian Roma who were murdered under Nazi rule.[79]

Other Romani Memorial Sites

In 2003, a memorial was erected in Helsinki for the Finnish Romani soldiers who fell during World War Two.[80] The significance of the monument is complex. On the one hand, it can be seen as one of a number of European war memorials that honor fallen soldiers, but it neglects the fact that some of the fallen soldiers fought on the side of Nazi Germany. In Finland's case, this is due to the fact that the country allied itself with Nazi Germany when the Soviet Union was invaded during the Continuation War. On the other hand, some Finnish Roma see the memorial as an affirmation of their connection to and acceptance in the country, for better or worse: "...our men also fought in the war and made their sacrifice just like any other Finn... we have no doubt always identified very strongly with this Finnishness and Finland and with this nationality."[81]

78 See "Excursus Memorial". The background to the debate on the memorial to Sinti and Romani is further discussed in Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, chapter V. See official website for the memorial at www.Stiftung-Denkmal.de.

79 Bratberg, "Enstemmig ja til minnesmerke."

80 Stenroos, "Movement in Finland."

81 Thurfjell, *Faith and Revivalism*, 21; Quote from Nordberg, "Claiming Citizenship."

15. Monument in Helsinki dedicated to Finnish Romani soldiers who died fighting for Finland in various conflicts. (Photo: Mertsi Ärling.)

Since 1996, Taternes Landsforening (one of the main Romani organizations in Norway) has held an annual ceremony at the Skammens stein (Stone of Shame) at Riis cemetery in Oslo. Originally a protest against the planned honoring of Norwegian eugenicist Johan Scharffenberg on May 7, 1996, this ceremony commemorates the Tater/Romani who suffered the abuses of the Norwegian state. The stone is placed at the mass grave once used by Gaustad's psychiatric hospital.[82] The majority of those who died at Gaustad's hospital were not Tater/Romani. The wording on the stone's plaque therefore alludes to other groups who suffered the abuses of early twentieth century "racial hygiene" psychiatry:

> Forgive but never forget. This plaque is dedicated to the memory of fellow human beings who have endured suffering due to majority community's inability and unwillingness to understand their unique character and fate.[83]

The memorial has become an especially important symbol to the Tater/Romani group, who gather each year for a ceremony where a manifesto is read

82 Selling, "Romani Resistance"; Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay"; Resandekartet," Skammens stein".

83 Inscription on the memorial. In Norwegian, the term used here is "storsamfunnet" the literal translation of which would be "the large society." It implies superiority in both power and size. For readability, the term "majority community" is used here.

Tilgi, men aldri glemme
Denne plaketten er satt opp til minne
om medmennesker som på ulike måter
ble ofre for storsamfunnets manglende
evne og vilje til å forstå deres
egenart og skjebne.

16. "Forgive but never forget." Inscription on the "Stone of Shame" in memory of the abuses committed against Resande and others by doctors, who together with the majority society, deprived them of their human value. Riis cemetery in Oslo. (Photo: Bodil Andersson.)

aloud. The manifesto, which has not changed since 1996, describes the collective abuse from the perspective of Tater/Romani and calls on the government and the church to take historical responsibility.[84] In this way, the act of confronting the past is manifested as a process with no endpoint: the goal lies in memory itself.

To date, the only memorial in Sweden dedicated to the abuses of antigypsyism is the memorial that was erected in Jönköping in 2015 in memory of the racial riots that targeted Resande in the city in 1948.[85] The memorial was erected after a local political process that shed light on a dark past that could no longer be ignored. In 2002, author Bo Hazell confronted the events of the past in his book *Resandefolket* (The Travelers), which he wrote in close collaboration with Resande. In 2005, the Left Party in Jönköping tabled a motion that would compel the municipality to issue a formal apology. In 2006, the story of this historical event was staged as a theatrical performance, *Väg utan slut* (Road without end), in a collaborative effort between the municipality, Resande, and local historians. And in 2010, the Left Party finally got to make its case for the erection of the memorial in a motion that linked the memo-

84 Fagerheim Kalsås, "Norway. Narrative Essay."

85 "Minnesmärke för resandefolket invigdes," *Jönköpings-Posten*, August 8, 2014; The history of these events is analyzed in Hazell, *Resandefolket*; Ericsson, "Tattarkravallerna i Jönköping 1948"; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.

17. The memorial to those affected by the so-called "Tattare riots" in Jönköping in 1948, inaugurated in 2014, is the first of its kind in Sweden. (Photo: Leo Selling Leukel.)

rial to the fight against modern day racism.[86] On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the race riots in Jönköping, Britt-Inger Lundqvist wrote a column on the RUNG website (a Resande organization) in which she highlighted the importance of the memorial in acknowledging a dark moment from the past that has been blocked from the collective memory of local residents.[87] At the same time, it is interesting to consider why, out of all the historical abuses suffered by Resande, this incident, and only this incident, has now received so much attention. The notion that the memorial commemorates an isolated, local incident and ignores the bigger picture was clearly expressed in the comments section to Lundqvist's column:

> …[many] have never heard about this so it is always blacked out. Of course it was awful, but they have done much worse to us Resande, throughout the 20th century, they have tried to eradicate the whole Romani popula-

86 Jönköpings kommun, "Kommunfullmäktiges protokoll."
87 Lundqvist, "'Tattarkravallerina' i Jönköping".

> tion. You have to face the racial biology, the forced sterilizations, the children who were stolen from them, etc. There is so much we need to account for; it's a shame this is not included in our Swedish history books.[88]

Combatting Antigypsyism: Parliamentary and Intergovernmental Interventions

Since the turn of the millennium, the EU, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have issued a wide range of documents demanding that member states take action to combat antigypsyism.[89] Most important are the aforementioned 2015 European Parliament resolution and the 2017 EU report by Soraya Post "On Fundamental Rights Aspects in Roma Integration in the EU: Fighting Anti-Gypsyism."[90] Within member states, national policies are generally linked to these international policy recommendations in some way, but they are also influenced by the agendas of Romani organizations in each country. Below are some examples of national programs that have been developed in collaboration with Romani people.

Norway

In 2009, the central actors in the Norwegian Tater/Romani movement met at the annual Falstad seminar. The seminar resulted in a joint statement that was addressed to the Norwegian Prime Minister.[91] The statement set out four points of particular importance to Tater/Romani in Norway: the right to schooling that is compatible with a travelling lifestyle; the right to education in Norwegian Romani; the creation of a cultural center; and a truth commission to highlight Norway's historical abuses against Tater/Romani. The statement did not succeed in its push for a truth commission, but the Norwegian government did establish a public commission, the *Tater/Romaniutvalget,* which was

88 Blog comment by the signature "Curt" at Lundqvist, "'Tattarkravallerina' i Jönköping".

89 See OSCE "Report—Equal access," 2012; OSCE "Report on Antigypsyism," 2005; OSCE (2005) "Conference Report," 2005; Council of Europe, "Memorandum 'Antigypsyism in Europe,'" 2016; Council of Europe, "Report on Combating Antigypsyism," 2013; Council of Europe ,"Declaration on the Rise of Antigypsyism," 2012; Council of Europe, "Recommendation (2008)5"; European Comission "Report on the implementation," 2015; European Commission, "An EU Framework," COM(2011), 173. Cf. Naydenova and Matarazzo, *Post-2020 EU Roma Strategy*.

90 European Parliament, "On Fundamental Rights," 2017/2038(INI).

91 Falstadseminariet, "Uttalelse."

18. Thomas Hammarberg led the Swedish Commission Against Antigypsyism 2016–2018. (Photo: Fred Taikon.)

tasked with investigating and documenting the policies of the Norwegian government, institutions and organizations towards Tater/Romani from 1850 up until today.[92] The committee was also tasked with proposing new policies to further the cause of reconciliation and justice. The report was presented at a ceremony in 2015. It received a mixed reception in the Tater/Romani community, and it is still unclear if the Norwegian government plans to make any policy decisions based on the report.

Sweden

Between 2014 and 2016, the Swedish Commission Against Antigypsyism was assigned by the government to investigate and explore measures to identify and combat antigypsyism. It was led by Thomas Hammarberg, and unlike previous investigations, a majority of those included in the commission were Roma.[93] The main conclusion of the commission was that Romani civil and social rights are restricted by structural antigypsyism, the effects of which are seen in access to education, housing, the labor market, social services, and healthcare.

92 Regjeringen, "Mandat for utvalg."

93 The members were Marianne Eliason, Eleanor Frankemo, Gunno Gunnmo, Domino Kai, Erland Kaldaras, Stefano Kuzhicov, Soraya Post, and Christian Åhlund. SOU 2016: 44.

A second important conclusion is that there is still widespread acceptance in Swedish society of discrimination and prejudice against Roma. The commission also pointed to the historical continuity of antigypsyism, citing the police registration of Roma as an example. The commission therefore called on political leaders to condemn all forms of antigypsyism and to establish Romani memorials and commemoration days. It also called on the Prime Minister to issue a formal apology for the state's historic abuses. The commission also recommended that the Equality Ombudsman target cases of antigypsyism and bring them before the courts. The commission recommended that the government systematically identify and evaluate the effect of measures against antigypsyism.

Finally, the commission also specifically recommended measures to strengthen Romani civil society by providing support to Romani NGOs and laying the groundwork for a state-funded national center for Romani affairs. Five years later, the issue is still being investigated, with no solution in sight.[94]

Germany

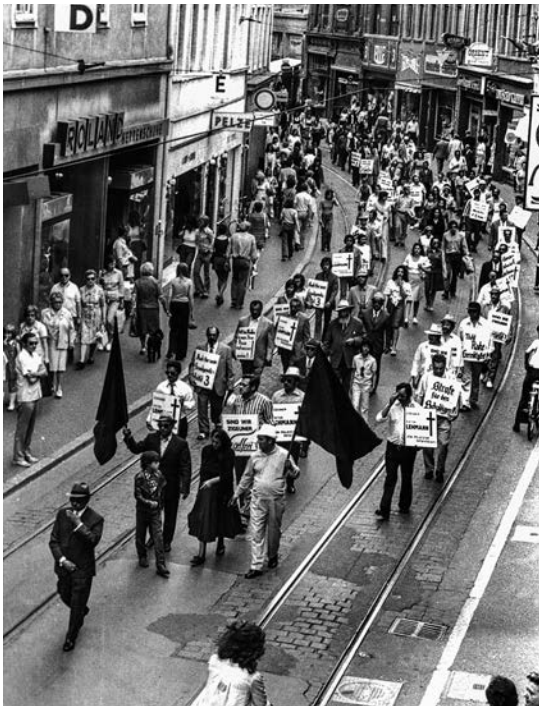
The aforementioned independent German expert commission on antigypsyism 2019–2021 was assigned to investigate the present-day situation and to give policy recommendations. In its decision to appoint the commission, the German federal government acknowledged its international obligations resulting from the recognition of Sinti and Roma as national minorities and the guidelines issued by the Council of Europe. The decision itself can also be seen as an acknowledgement of a policy failure that would apply to many of Europe's countries: "To date, antigypsyism has not been recognized as a societal problem."[95]

Romani Extra-Parliamentary Interventions Against Antigypsyism

In this section, I will review a few examples of extra-parliamentary Romani political action in different countries. These actions have taken place outside the institutional political system and aim to combat antigypsyism and secure the right to a self-defined Romani identity.

94 Ministry of Culture, "Uppdragsbeskrivning," June 5, 2017. See below, Excursus in chapter 6, "A Collective Romani voice?".

95 German Bundestag, "Antwort der Bundesregierung," September 11, 2019.



19. The German Sinti's first demonstration was held in Heidelberg in 1973 in response to the shooting death of a Sinti man by police. (Unknown photographer/ Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung)

Demonstrations and Hunger Strikes

The 1965 Romani May Day demonstration in Stockholm, which was led by Katarina Taikon, was organized to demand the right to education. This event is considered the first Romani public demonstration in Sweden. In Germany, Sinti activists held the first anti-discrimination demonstration in Heidelberg in 1973. That demonstration was a direct response to the killing of a Sinti German, Anton Lehmann, who was shot to death by the police. These two demonstrations had different backgrounds and rallying cries, but both represented the breakout of the Romani civil rights struggle into the public streets and squares.

There are also several examples of collective Romani mobilization against antigypsy violence and discriminatory treatment. In Poland, the Mława riot in 1991 was the spark that led to the formation of a Romani political organization.[96] And in Hungary in the 1990s, Romani activists and non-Romani sym-

96 *Stowarzyszenie Romów w Polsce* (The Association of Roma in Poland), Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Mirga-Wójtowicz, "Roma Movement in Poland."

20. The police raid and eviction of Travelers at Dale Farm in October 2011 turned violent. (Photo: Mary Turner.)

pathizers staged peaceful demonstrations against violent attacks and propaganda spread by racist politicians. One example is the demonstration in Eger on July 11, 1993.[97] Another case of collective activism occurred in Toronto in 1997, when the hateful rhetoric and violence of skinheads was answered with celebratory street parties to welcome Czech Roma refugees. Romani activists successfully pursued charges against the skinheads in court, and they were ultimately convicted of hate crimes.[98]

In Germany, a series of high-profile Romani protests have taken place since 1989, including hunger strikes and a protest camp on the grounds of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial Site, the occupation of churches, and the organization of *pauper marches*.[99] All of these protests had one common goal: to stop the deportation of Romani refugees to the former Yugoslavia.

In Great Britain, campaigns against racism and state discrimination, such as the violent eviction from Dale Farm in 2011,[100] helped unify and strengthen

97 Kóczé, "Movement in Hungary."
98 Lee, "Canada and the USA."
99 "Lieber in den Rhein," *Der Spiegel*, October 21, 1991; "Wider das Vergessen!" *Radio Dreyeckland*, January 21, 2015. See also Gress, "Sinti and Roma."
100 "Dale Farm," *The Telegraph*, October 19, 2011.

the resolve of different groups of Gypsies, Travelers and Roma as a collective force, often voiced by the *Gypsy Council*.[101]

Since 2011 "Roma Pride" demonstrations have been held in a number of European cities, with the explicit aim of promoting diversity and counteracting racism against Roma. Roma Pride was initiated by a coalition of non-Roma and Roma in response to the antigypsy rhetoric of then-French president, Nicholas Sarkozy.[102]

Monitoring and Legal Support

In Hungary, a number of legal advocacy organizations have sprung up to help systematically address discrimination by disseminating information and pursuing legal action in the courts.[103] In Germany, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma has been monitoring press coverage since the 1990s in an effort to combat discriminatory and antigypsy reporting. A large number of cases have been reported to the German Press Council. Backed by information revealed in a number of reports, the Central Council has also called for stricter legislation.[104] In Great Britain, the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association was founded in 2013 in response to discrimination within the police authority against its Romani employees.[105] Since 1996, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) in Budapest has become a hub for the ongoing work to combat antigypsyism through research, advice, and training in the area of human rights. And as mentioned above, the ERRC also assists in the pursuit of legal action. The organization Civil Rights Defenders has played a similar role in Sweden.

Reclaiming History

Finally, the debates within academia concerning the Gypsy Lore Society and Romani cultural policy initiatives, such as the European Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), has increasingly become an arena for negotiating conflicts around Romani historiography and collective memory. Traditional perspectives from the colonially biased research field of Romani Studies have been challenged by an emerging focus on post-colonial theory and a new generation of Romani

101 Acton, "Movement in Great Britain."
102 McGarry, *Romaphobia*.
103 See European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), www.errc.org.
104 Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma, "Antidiskriminierungsarbeit."
105 Acton, "Movement in Great Britain."

scholars.[106] As I will review further in the next chapter, Romani scholars and intellectuals have increasingly used academic discourse to "speak back," reclaim history and combat antigypsyism. One prominent example is the Romani feminist and Associate Professor of gender studies Ethel Brooks, who proclaims:

> Berlin is ours. Istanbul is ours. Lety is ours: even under the pig farm, our bones are mixed with the soil of Europe. Sofia is ours. Milan is ours. London, Paris, Belgrade and Frankfurt are ours. We belong to Shutka, Budapest, Amsterdam, New York and Buenos Aires. Europe is ours. We are Europe; we claim the persecution we have faced, the millennium of violence and exclusion, extraction and enslavement. We claim Europe. We claim the city. We claim the world. We claim our place, our history, our future. We claim Romanofuturo. Romanofuturo is everyone's future. Freedom for us is freedom for all.[107]

This is a powerful and emancipatory perspective of knowledge production that is focused on freeing people from oppression, injustice and discrimination.

In this chapter, we have seen the interplay that occurs between the critical discourse on Romani history, political debates, and street protests, education in schools and universities, and the establishment of social, political, and cultural projects aiming at fully realizing the rights of Romani people. In the following chapter, we will take a closer look at the scholarly debates about the social and cultural experiences of Romani people in the field of Romani Studies.

Excursus: Memorial to the Nazi genocide of European Romani and Sinti

In neither West nor East Germany were Romani victims of the Holocaust included in the official memorial policy. When Germany was united after the fall of the wall, a new process was set in motion that included the renegotiation of the collective memory and the revision of East German memorials. After the unwavering civil rights struggle

106 ERIAC opened in Berlin in 2017. One of its most outspoken critics has been Yaron Matras, who believes that ERIAC only serves the self-interests of a small group of activists. Matras, "Commentary"; cf. Acton, "Scientific Racism"; Selling, "Assessing the Historical Irresponsibility".

107 Brooks, "Europe is Ours."

waged by the Sinti and Roma movements in West Germany in the 1980s, Sinti and Roma could no longer be excluded.

As Berlin was the capital of East Germany, the ceremonial changing of the guard was held on the grand boulevard Unter den Linden in front of the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism. When Berlin became the capital of the new, unified Germany, this was recast, as were most East German monuments. In the revamped Neue Wache (New Guardhouse), Sinti and Roma were acknowledged as victims of the genocide for the first time. But at the same time, the recast Neue Wache was criticized for its nationalist emphasis on the suffering of the German people, only mentioning the genocide of Jews and Romani people as an aside. This made the creation of a memorial dedicated exclusively to the victims of the Holocaust inevitable.[108]

German nationalists saw this as a provocation, rehashing painful memories, and had no desire to erect more monuments as a reminder of this dark past. Adding to the complexity of the process, a number of historians and Jewish leaders did not want a shared memorial for Jews and Romani people since this could be interpreted as a relativization of the Shoah. When it was ultimately decided that the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust would exclusively commemorate Jewish victims, the erection of a third memorial dedicated to the Romani victims, became a political inevitability. Eventually, another memorial in the center of Berlin was dedicated to the homosexual victims of Nazi persecution.[109]

The debate also revealed a shift in the meaning of the term Holocaust. In research and policy, this term was considered to signify the Nazi genocide as a whole, in other words, racially motivated genocide against Jews as well as Sinti and Roma, making the term unsuitable for separate memorials. The official designations for the memorials[110] are instead "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" and "Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under National Socialism."

108 Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, Chapter IV.
109 Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, Chapter V.
110 Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, 264.

During a debate that would stretch out over more than a decade, the Jewish and Romani positions were often seen as irreconcilable. The debate sometimes seemed to devolve into a grotesque spectacle, only serving to benefit those who were adamantly opposed to the construction of memorials to Holocaust victims in the first place. This back and forth was finally put to an end in 2001 when the new chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Paul Spiegel, together with Simon Wiesenthal and other prominent members of the Jewish community, put their support behind a separate Romani Holocaust memorial, termed as a *Holocaust* [sic!]-*Denkmal der Sinti und Roma* (Holocaust Memorial to the Sinti and Roma).[111] At the inauguration of the memorial to Jewish victims, Spiegel also honored the Romani victims.[112] And during the inauguration of the Romani memorial, Romani Rose highlighted the inseparable nature of the fight against antisemitism and antigypsyism as equally important.[113]

The inscription on the Romani memorial was a source of controversy since no umbrella term could be agreed upon that captured the victims' self-identification. Finally, it was agreed that the term "Gypsy" ("Zigeuner") would be used as a source concept: the introductory information board states that the memorial refers to all those who were persecuted by the Nazis after being branded "Gypsies" ("Zigeuner"). The memorial, which was designed by the artist Dani Karavan, is located near the German parliament building and was inaugurated on October 24, 2012.[114]

111 Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti and Roma, "Presseerklärung," May 2001.
112 Spiegel, "Rede anlässlich der Einweihung."
113 Rose, "Denkmal."
114 Deutsche Bundesregierung, "Gedenken."

21. Romani Rose leads a demonstration in front of the Reichstag building in Berlin to push for the erection of a memorial to the Sinti and Roma victims of the Holocaust. (Photo: Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti and Roma.)

Chapter 3

Decolonizing Romani Studies

Liberation is about becoming a historical subject. As I described in the introduction to this book, unjust hierarchies of power—in this case, the social subordination of Roma—are maintained through hegemony: antigypsyist preconceptions that shape the actions of both Roma and non-Roma. Originally, religion played a decisive role in shaping these preconceptions, but this role has been gradually taken over by scholarly researchers since the time of the Enlightenment. Given this change, it is now academia's turn to be put under the microscope.

In determining the legitimacy of research done within the field of Romani Studies and research on antigypsyism, more and more emphasis is being placed on the importance of the researcher's perspective and positionality for the legitimacy of the research. In this chapter, I examine the relationship between antigypsyism and gypsylorism (philoziganism), where the latter term describes the construction of Roma ("Gypsies") as the exotic "other" in Europe.[1] The evolution from the Gypsiology (Tsiganologie) of the past to modern day Romani Studies is examined through a historiographical analysis of relevant literature. The Gypsy Lore Society, an international research association, has maintained a dominant position in this field since its founding in 1888 in Great Britain. The analysis presented in this chapter will show how the gypsylorism of the past has been challenged in recent years, both through the rise of Romani voices in debates around fiction and non-fiction, but also through a postcolonial-inspired critique within Romani studies, a research field which until today has been dominated by non-Romani voices. The latter is illustrated in an analysis of the internal struggle within the Gypsy Lore Society, namely, the debate over whether the organization should assume historical responsibility for helping legitimize antigypsyism.

1 Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism."

The primary aim of this chapter is to identify historiographical trends in knowledge development from the early era of "Gypsiology" (Tsiganologie) to modern day Romani Studies and, finally, to discuss Critical Romani Studies, which is a field of study that has emerged in just the past few years.[2]

I discuss the process through which the "subaltern intervention" in Romani studies, which consists of the study object "Roma" becoming the subject who is writing and no longer accepts the colonial subordination to which the research discipline itself has contributed.[3] Looking back at the origins of this process, one can point to Ian Hancock's book *The Pariah Syndrome* as a seminal moment. At the same time, my analysis here is a part of a larger debate about the culpability of the Gypsy Lore Society (GLS) in reinforcing the racist paradigm that led from the romantic fantasy of the "Gypsy" to the gas chambers of the Nazi regime. Therefore, I begin with a discussion of a defeated proposal presented to the GLS Board of Directors in Istanbul in 2012, which called on the GLS to acknowledge its historical role and publicly apologize for its racist past.

I then return to the main focus of the chapter and highlight examples from the Nordic region. Finally, I conclude by discussing a second GLS resolution that was presented at the GLS conference at the Södertörn University of Stockholm in 2016 as a compromise between traditionalists and critics. In both content and purpose, this compromise was a defensive "memory" statement designed to appease all parties. I also comment on the controversy around the appointment of GLS President Marushiakova to Dr. Honoris Causa of Södertörn University in 2020, which in retrospect was an unfortunate decision by an incompetent faculty board.

At the GLS Board meeting in Istanbul in 2012, Secretary Thomas Acton, along with the board members Colin Clark and Margaret Greenfields, put forward the following motion:

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2 In Europe, this school of thought has a particular stronghold at the Central European University in Budapest and Vienna. The annual conference Critical Perspectives on Romani Studies has been held since 2017, and in 2018, the first issue of the journal *Critical Romani Studies* was published.

3 "Subaltern" originally denotes groups that are outside society's dominant power structure. Gramsci, *En Kollektiv Intellektuell*. Within postcolonial studies, the term is mainly used to denote groups that have historically been subjected to colonial domination and still hold subordinate status. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"; H. Bhabha, "Unsatisfied". "Intervention" here denotes the context of expressions and discourses that call into question the prevailing understanding. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, *Diskursanalys*.

> That this Board [of Directors] recommends the General Meeting to acknowledge that, despite its undoubted scientific contribution, there was an historic complicity of the early Gypsy Lore Society with racist ideas and practices while it [was] still based in England, and that as the successors of those earlier members, we apologise for harm done, and resolve to build upon the positive elements of their work to build those inter-communal historical understandings which can transcend past conflicts.[4]

Prior to the meeting, Acton had provided the board members with facts and academic references supporting the allegation of racism. The examples he cited were all dated after 1945 and included the publication of racist content in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (JGLS), with Herman Arnold's 1961 article "The Gypsy Gene" being the most flagrant example.[5] Acton also cited the impact of the GLS on antigypsyist policies in Great Britain and elsewhere. The reactions of some board members to the proposed resolution are illustrative of both the principal complexity of historical responsibility and the unresolved antagonism within today's GLS.[6]

The GLS Annual General Meeting in Istanbul revealed additional antagonisms: the meager representation of Romani people in the organization, the uncritical acceptance of support from the Turkish authorities, and the fact that the conference was held in an area that was being gentrified at the expense of local Romani communities. With regard to the acceptance of Turkish support, GLS President Elena Marushiakova responded that ". . . every single government in Europe can be accused of racist policies," and that ". . .those who are dissatisfied with the policy [sic] of Turkey should find a country where there are no problems in this regard and organize a conference there."[7] Treasurer Sheila Salo opposed the resolution since she considered it wrong "for contemporary scholars to apologize for actions in which they were not personally involved."[8] Board Member Anne Sutherland dismissed the motion as "silly."[9] Marushiakova twisted the argument by saying she "could not feel guilty for

4 Gypsy Lore Society, "2012 Meeting of the Board." The statement refers to the fact that the GLS in 1989 moved its headquarters to the USA.

5 The journal changed its name in 2000 to *Romani Studies*.

6 "Antagonism" is used in this chapter to signify the sense of contradiction between incompatible descriptions of reality and discourses within a certain area (cf. Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, 46-47).

7 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.

8 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.

9 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.

the British Empire's racism in the nineteenth century."[10] Board Member Matt Salo did not want to "fix the blame for the past"[11] and instead urged the board to set its sights on the future. Yaron Matras (then editor of the GLS journal, *Romani Studies*) opposed the resolution, arguing that "the facts had not been well enough established."[12] He instead suggested that those who proposed the motion should be commissioned to prepare a fact-based report to present at the next conference in 2013 in Glasgow, Scotland. Thomas Acton responded that the facts had already been established through the information distributed prior to the meeting and in his own book from 1974.[13] Neither the proposal to present the case in Glasgow nor the motion were accepted. During the closing discussion, Matras claimed that Acton was "...not actually interested in discussing racism, but hypocritically pursuing a personal agenda, caused by a psychological need to feel influential."[14]

These defensive maneuvers missed the point in several respects. First of all, there are a number of organizations and states that have already issued apologies for past injustices against Romani people, including Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Germany (see table below).[15] These kinds of official apologies are inevitably not an admission of guilt but of historical responsibility. The apologies are necessarily always a collective endeavour, in the sense that through a historical apology, a collective identity, which builds on tradition and continuity, invokes commitments for the future, thus renegotiating who may identify with the collective and how. A prominent example is German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's declaration in 1998, when he stated that the Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe signifies "...the core of our self-understanding as a nation," in the sense of a recognition that "... Germany carries a particular responsibility for maintaining the memory of the Holocaust."[16] This type of apology may come from a state, church, institution, or organization. In the case of the GLS, what is at stake is the inclu-

10 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.
11 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.
12 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012
13 Acton, *Gypsy Politics*.
14 GLS, "Minutes of the Annual General Meeting," 2012.
15 Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan also apologized to the Romani on behalf of the Turkish state at a large gathering (*bulumasi*) of 16,000 Romani at Zeytinburnu Abdi Ipekci Sports Stadium on 14 March 2010. The 2012 GLS meeting was thus held against the backdrop of an ambiguous message from the Turkish leader: on the one hand, there was Erdogan's public apology, while on the other hand, there was the ongoing demolition of Romani housing blocks and the forced displacement of Roma communities (Adrian Marsh email to author). Cf. Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 159 ff.
16 Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, 252.

sion of Romani scholars and critical perspectives in the most prestigious body within the field of Romani Studies.

Second, some of the board members failed to note that the proposed motion did not reference the discourses of the late nineteenth century, "when scientific racism was the norm," but "...the post-1945 era, when people should have known better."[17] From an ethical and philosophical standpoint, this should have made it easier to apologize, since the scholars of the post-war period must be considered "morally competent":[18] after 1945, scientific racism was severely criticized, not least for its associations with racial biology and the Nazi death camps. However, the personal connections between leading GLS members and the researchers that "should have known better" along with the tradition in academia of honoring long-standing members made the matter particularly sensitive.[19] In the end, the main products of the discussions were an article by Acton 2016,[20] where he again established the facts and defined the problem at hand, and a proposed compromise resolution, which would be adopted at the GLS Annual General Meeting and Conference in Stockholm in 2016. I will return to this at the end of the chapter.

Scientific Racism, Philoziganism, Gypsylorism, and Antigypsyism

The intervention at the 2012 GLS meeting, the motion for a resolution, was directed at scientific racism. This motion was based on Thomas Acton's definition of scientific racism: the ". . . view that there are originally distinct, and still clearly bounded categories of human being, to be called 'races,' who are genealogically linked and whose distinct physical appearance and/or social characteristics, are passed on by biological descent."[21] Acton deliberately formulated this as a narrow definition. The term antigypsyism (or the analogue term antiziganism) was used neither in the motion proposed in Istanbul nor in Acton's 2016 article.

17 "Justification Letter for the Motion," distributed to the board members before the GLS board meeting. (Anonymous author.)

18 Schefczyk, *Verantwortung für historisches Unrecht*.

19 In this respect, a parallel can be drawn to the history of Interpol, which shows that elite organizations that are built on tradition and personal networks, where there is a tendency to one-sidedly defend the ouevres of "the fathers," can prohibit a break with cultural codes, such as antigypsyism (Selling, "The Obscured Story").

20 Acton, "Scientific Racism."

21 Acton, "Scientific Racism."

Based on my own research, I define antigypsyism as exclusionary and discriminatory discursive practices, which are centered around the constructed image of a "conceptual Gypsy."[22] Further, I differentiate between different forms of antigypsyism, each of which, in social reality, has manifested in different policies directed against Romani and other people who have historically been associated with "the conceptual Gypsy." In practice, antigypsyism usually manifests as a mixture of these things. Nevertheless, distinguishing between these forms can provide analytical clarity.

Table 1. Types of Antigypsyism: A Tentative Model

Type	Basis	Historical consequences
Social	Social contempt, class contempt, Social Darwinism	*Sozialrassismus*, forced assimilation
Ethnographic (cultural)	Culturalism, orientalism	Deprogramming
Racialist	Racial biology	"apartheid," sterilization, genocide
Structural	Structures that prolong the consequences of other kinds of antigypsyism	Social, cultural, and political disadvantages for Romani people
Gypsylorism / philoziganism	Orientalism: essentialist and exclusionary discourses on "the eternal Gypsy" as an anti-modern counterpoint; not to be persecuted, but also not allowed to develop or integrate as an equal	Enclavization, cultural exploitation, appropriation
Secondary antigypsyism	Discourses that disparage Romani voices and blame the victim: "No smoke without fire," etc.	Rejections of Romani claims for rectification; politicians' fear of being branded pro-Romani

In a previous essay, I equated philoziganism to gypsylorism and defined the term as a non-hostile, but nevertheless essentialist and exclusionary, discourse based on "the conceptual Gypsy."[23] However, given the context of the debates following the GLS Annual General Meeting 2012, I now acknowledge that the term has acquired other meanings. I contend that the most useful operational definition of gypsylorism is the definition developed by Ken Lee: "Whilst Orientalism is the construction of the exotic Other outside

22 Selling, "Conceptual Gypsy"; cf. Selling et al. eds., *Antiziganism and Alliance against Antigypsyism*, "Reference Paper."

23 Selling, "Conceptual Gypsy."

Europe, Gypsylorism is the construction of the exotic Other within Europe—Romanies are the 'Orientals within.'"[24] In this sense, gypsylorism is a discourse of "othering," which has historically been reinforced through religion, literature, arts, media, research and other arenas of culture.[25] However, the meaning of gypsylorism has also acquired an antithetical meaning in the ongoing antagonism, as Yaron Matras puts it:

> The term Gypsylorist (or: Gypsiologist) is used on a wholesale basis to refer to the Other—the other scholar who investigates Gypsies, but whose scholarship is rejected, because it does not lead to the same conclusions or engage in the same activism as that of the author him/herself. "Gypsylorist" or "Gypsiologist" is thus essentially a denunciatory term, rather than a descriptive or analytical one that refers to any particular point of view, methodology, affiliation, or era.[26]

In this chapter, I would first argue that gypsylorism, according to Lee's definition, is a necessary, but not all encompassing, component of the concept antigypsyism. Note that I also include forms of antigypsyism that do not qualify as scientific racism according to Acton's definition.

This stance would thus result in a critique of the GLS self-understanding, the first result being that the GLS is cast in an unfavorable light. The second result is that not only the concept of "Gypsy lore" is challenged but also the term "Gypsy," as this is an outisder denomination, an exonym, that has been rejected as a self-designation by many Romani groups due to its stereotypical and pejorative uses in the majority society.[27] This likely figured in to the renaming of the journal and the conference, as well as the change in the self-denomination of the field of study itself from Gypsiology (Tsiganologie, etc., in other languages) to Romani Studies. Third, the GLS definition of the field of study as "...the study of Gypsy, Traveller, and analogous peripatetic cultures

24 Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism."

25 Othering means that the starting point for the scholar is his or her own identity (e.g. white, non-Romani, heterosexual man) and describes other categories as subordinate deviations. The term is used in critical research such as postcolonial theory and gender studies.

26 Matras, "Who are the Gypsylorists?"

27 In the spirit of activism within identity politics, some groups have deliberately reclaimed and redefined the term "Gypsy" as a political label. See the British *Gypsy Council for Culture, Welfare and Education*; cf. also the use of the term "Tater" among Travellers in Norway (Minken, "Romanifolk"). However, it is important to avoid generalization and to respect the right to self-identification and self-designation. This point was communicated to the GLS Board by Romani students at Södertörn University, who attended the conference in Stockholm in 2016 (Christina Rodell Olgaç, email to author).

worldwide…"[28] must be questioned since an essentialist ascription of nomadism is conflated with the concepts of gypsylorism and scientific racism.[29]

Challenging Antigypsyist Hegemony through Interventions

My interest here is how the scientifically constructed narratives of Romani groups have changed from the Gypsiology of the past to the diversified field that is now called Romani Studies. This diverse field has gradually come to include Romani voices and non-Romani self-reflections on antigypsyist hegemony, of which the field itself has been part for centuries. This historical trajectory corresponds with societal change and is evidenced by changing views of Romani among the elites of majority society, such as views expressed in political debates and policy documents like state inquiries, legislation, public statements, and so forth.

In the following, I mainly explore this trajectory through the lens of the Nordic region, with a few important examples from other regions.

Figure 1 depicts how viewpoints (position/positionality) changed 1730–2015 in a large number of selected works and policy documents (see below). At one end of the scale we have *Gypsylorism*, at the other *Romani subalternity*. The clouds in the figure symbolise discursive formations.

On the bottom line of the figure, we see the perspective of Othering: the us–them juxtaposition and the unreflective use of exonyms ("Gypsy," *"Zigeuner," "Tattare*," etc.), which was completely dominant in its essentialist, and often scientifically racist, form until the 1950s, but more recent examples of publications in this tradition can easily be found.[30] However, as this chapter discusses, gypsylorism is by no means a discourse of the past: in a perhaps

28 Sheila Salo, email to author; cf. Acton, "Scientific Racism"; Trehan, "Human rights. Entrepreneurship"; Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism." See also the chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Romani Rose, "The nomadic has nothing to do with our cultural identity" (Tape recording of ODIHR/OSCE meeting, Berlin, September 6, 2016, in author's possession.). Is Rose wrong or does the GLS definition represent the view of the outsider?

29 Essentialist in the sense that characteristics are claimed to be fundamental or unchanging. Cf. Acton, "Scientific Racism"; Trehan, "Human rights. Entrepreneurship"; Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism."

30 Examples: Björckman, "Dissertatio academica de cingaris"; Grellmann, *Historischer Versuch*; Rabenius *Observationes historiam Ziguenorum illustrantes*; SOU 1923:2; Etzler, "Zigenarna och deras avkomlingar; Socialstyrelsen, "Zigenarnas antal och levnadsförhållanden"; Socialstyrelsen "Tattarnas antal och levnadsförhållanden"; Arnold, "The Gypsy Gene"; Lo-Johansson, *Zigenare*; Svensson, "Tattarnas spel med rättvisan"; Arnstberg, *Svenskar och zigenare*; Arnstberg, *Romer i Sverige*; Marushiakova et al., *Zigeuner am Schwarzen Meer*.

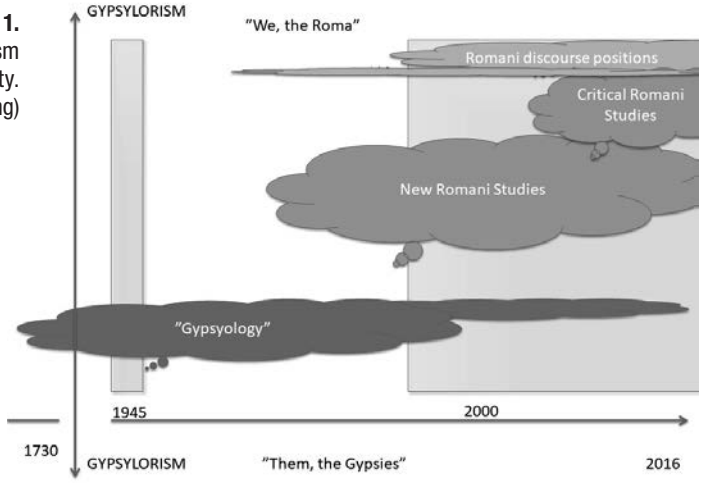

Figure 1. From gypsylorism to subalternity. (Graphic: Jan Selling)

less obvious way, it continues to influence the understanding of many contemporary Romani Studies scholars and thus remains surprisingly unchallenged.

At the top of the figure, we see the emergence of Romani voices over time, both in academic and cultural discourses concerning Romani people.[31] In the middle of the figure, we see a rapidly expanding field of what can be called New Romani Studies, primarily non-Romani scholars who, to differing degrees, strive to listen to Romani voices while providing alternatives to colonialist discourses about Romani.[32] This field also includes critical research on the majority society, including research on antigypsyism and the Romani Holocaust.[33] The more pronounced post-colonial focus in Critical Romani Studies is a relatively new but growing field. These perspectives, or discursive paradigms, are

31 See, e.g., Taikon, *Zigenerska*; Taikon, *Zigenare är vi*; Hancock, *Pariah Syndrome*; Hancock, "Response to Raymond Pearson's review"; Hancock, *We Are the Romani People;* Kawczynski, "Politics of Romani Politics"; Åkerfeldt, "Buron kallar oss tattare"; Kwiek, "Unintentional Exclusion"; Brisenstam, "What is a 'Gypsy'?"; Ryder et al., eds., *Roma Rights*; K. Lee, "Orientalism and Gypsylorism"; Hellmann and Lundqvist, eds., *Dinglarens väg – Vorsnos drom*; Avorin, "Europe and Antiziganism"; Lundberg, *För vad sorg och smärta*.

32 See, e.g., Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change*; Ryder, Cemlyn and Acton, eds., *Hearing the voices*; Hazell, *Resandefolket*; Lindholm, "Vägarnas folk"; Lucassen, *Zigeuner;* Martins Holmberg, *Vägskälens kulturarv*; Montesino, "Zigenarfrågan"; Pulma, ed., *De finska romernas historia*; Rodell Olgaç, "Den romska minoriteten"; Tervonen "'Gypsies', 'Travellers' and 'Peasants'; Willems, *Searching for the True Gypsy*.

33 See, e.g., Zimmermann, *Verfolgt, vertrieben, vernichtet*; Wippermann, *Wie die Zigeuner*; Wippermann, *Auserwählte Opfer?*; Lewy, *The Nazi Persecution*; End, Herold and Robel, eds., *Antiziganistische Zustände*; Stewart, ed., *Gypsy "Menace"*; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Selling et al., eds., *Antiziganism*; Rosvoll and Bielenberg, *Antisiganisme* ; Rosvoll, Lien and Brustad, *"Å bli dem kvit"*; Agarin, ed., *When Stereotype Meets Prejudice*; Ericsson, "Exkludering, assimilering eller utrotning?; Ohlsson Al Fakir, *Svenska kyrkans förhållande*; Ohlsson Al Fakir, "Nya rum"; Kaveh, "Omstreiferuvæsenet".

also reflected in policy documents that were initially of a repressive, racist character. Romani perspectives were subsequently included, but it was not until very recently that Romani people were included in policy processes. These perspectives are also reflected in works of fiction that have gone from exotifying the fictional "conceptual Gypsy" to more realistic depictions and, finally, authentic Romani voices. Significant breaking points are: around 1945 as scientific racism loses all credibility after World War Two and around 2000 as new discourses emerge on historical responsibility and Romani rights. Possibly, we are today at a new breaking point: the "critical turn in Romani studies," which should be understood as "decolonizing" knowledge production.[34]

Table 2. Timeline for Significant Acknowledgments, Apologies, and Memorials[35]

- 1982 The German Chancellor acknowledged the genocide of Sinti and Roma.
- 1995 Germany recognized Sinti and Romani as national minorities.
- 1995 The Church of Finland apologized for its historic role in discrimination against Roma.
- 1998 The Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities entered into force. To date, 39 member states have ratified the convention.
- 1998 The Government of Norway and the Church of Norway formally apologized to Tater/Roma.
- 1998 Finland recognized Roma as a national minority.
- 1999 Sweden recognized Roma (including Resande) as a national minority. Norway recognized Roma and Travelers as separate national minority groups.
- 2000 The Swedish government apologized to the Resande and the Church of Sweden acknowledged the need for reconciliation with Roma.
- 2003 A memorial was erected in Finland honoring Finnish Romani soldiers who lost their lives during World War Two.
- 2010 The Prime Minister of Turkey apologized to the Romani people.
- 2012 In Berlin, the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under National Socialism was inaugurated.
- 2014 The Swedish government published the White Paper and appointed a commission against antigypsyism.
- 2015 The EU Parliament declared August 2 the annual "European Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day" and called on member states to "combatting Anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma."[36]

34 Clark, "Roma Knowledge-Production." See also: Bogdan et al., "Introducing the New Journal." Cf. Stewart, "Nothing about us."

35 The examples are discussed in previous chapters.

36 European Parliament, RSP 2015/2615.

There are a number of intense debates concealed in the matrix, some of which I will return to below. And the matrix should also be seen in the context of societal change, which, for example, manifests in a state's recognition of Romani rights and their historical responsibility for legitimizing and implementing antigypsyism, as described in previous chapters. This process of change culminated around the turn of the millennium and was reinforced by transnational discourses on the principles of universal human rights and historical responsibility.

These discursive events would not have occurred without the added pressure of Romani activism. My hypothesis is that the emergence of Romani voices in different forms of literature, particularly since 2000, also challenges the self-understanding of academics working in Romani Studies and raises new questions around the conditions of knowledge production (epistemology) and the political responsibility of academia.[37]

These voices may be included, or not, in political processes involving the Romani people. Yaron Matras, who has been actively involved in debates with a number of these challengers, suggests that "Hancock . . . and other activists view the historical discourse as an instrument toward changing the image of the Rom [sic] and their status in present-day society."[38] This is an important observation, but I formulate it a bit differently: Hancock and other Romani intellectuals engaging in these debates are part of an intervention that challenges the hegemony of gypsylorism. It is an intervention that invites us to reconsider our understanding of "Roma" or "Gypsies," an understanding that has been manufactured by non-Roma for centuries and which in many cases helped legitimize racist policies and promote persecution of Roma. An in-depth analysis of traditional and emerging critical narratives goes beyond the scope of this chapter; my aim here is solely to argue in favor of exploring this dimension and to highlight the need for further research.[39]

Further, I argue that not all material written by non-Romani scholars before 2000 is plagued by prejudice, and even if it was, that this does not render the work useless for applications in contemporary critical and emancipatory Romani Studies. For example, the oldest Swedish dissertation on the subject was written in Uppsala in 1730.[40] And while it is admittedly charac-

37 See Kawczynski, "Politics of Romani Politics"; Acton, ed., *Scholarship and the Gypsy Struggle*; Kovats, "Intellectual and Political Accountability."

38 Matras, "The Role of Language", 74.

39 For a critical analysis of traditional narratives, see Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*. For new, critical narratives, see RomArchive, www.romarchive.eu.

40 Björckman, "Dissertatio."

terized by ignorance and the proto-racist thinking of the time,[41] it provides valuable empirical material on the use of the Romani Chib that was spoken in Sweden in the early eighteenth century. Another thesis by Laurentius Rabenius focused on "Gypsies" and was published in Uppsala in 1791.[42] The thesis not only expresses elements of early scientific racism, but it also gives information about the establishment of an international intellectual arena, where ideas were exchanged and found their way into scientific journals like the *English Magazine*. In the thesis, Rabenius invokes the earliest theories developed to classify humans into races (one of which was developed by Carl von Linné), but also the ground-breaking work of Heinrich Grellmann from 1787.[43] Grellmann, on the other hand, based most of his scholarly work on the works of others, but through his synthesis, he became one of the most influential Gypsiologists of his time. He created a compelling depiction of "the Gypsy" that appealed to the tastes of the ruling classes. He was frequently cited, even in the twentieth century, and his ideas on cultural de-programming as a preferable alternative to genocide influenced the Norwegian policy of forced assimilation of Tater/Romani, a policy that lasted well into the 1980s.[44]

Much like in other parts of Europe, scientific racism was accepted as "common sense" among the intelligentsia in the Nordic countries up until 1945. However, the validity of this theory as early as 1935 was challenged in Sweden at the very Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala when its head, Herman Lundborg, was replaced by a young Gunnar Dahlberg, who was driven by the conviction that racism had no place in scientific theory. In 1951, Dahlberg was one of many scholars who backed the UN "Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences," which declared that there were "no scientific grounds whatever for the racialist position regarding purity of race and the hierarchy of inferior and superior races" and that "genetic differences are of little significance in determining the social and cultural differences between different groups of men."[45]

Once serious challenges were mounted against racial biology, it had real-world consequences for the social reality of everyday people. At the time the scientific world reached this breaking point, the Swedish state was performing

41 Proto-racism shares many similarities with the scientific racism that developed in the nineteenth century in its use of stereotypes and reliance on classification; for example, it associates skin colour with "people character" but lacks the latter's pseudo-scientific basis.

42 Rabenius, "Observationes."

43 Rabenius, "Observationes"; Grellmann, *Historischer Versuch*.

44 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, Chapter 1; NOU 1980: 42.

45 Unesco, "Statement."

inventories and keeping registries of both "*Zigenare*" ("Gypsies") and "*Tattare*" ("Tinkers").[46] If the state wished to classify people according to the research of race scientist Allan Etzler, it was clear who qualified as a "Zigenare": it was the group of Roma who had been systematically excluded since they arrived in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century. The praxis of exclusion made it easy to identify group affiliation. But who exactly were the "Tattare"? This group, which was only partly made up of Swedish Romani speakers, was fairly well integrated into society (though subject to discrimination) and lived a sedentary lifestyle, which made it difficult to determine who was part of the group and who was not. This gave rise to an intense scientific debate about the group's origins and characteristics. Were "Tattare" a "mixed race that emerged from relations between the Gypsies and the indigenous population,"[47] as Etzler contended, or a socially isolated underclass, as his opponent Adam Heymowski claimed?[48] The "Tattare" state investigators ultimately did not want to stake their reputation on one theory or the other, and their final report is contradictory and confusing, as it was eventually based on a circular line of reasoning: a "Tattare" is someone who is like a "Tattare"."[49] This would be the last inventory of "Tattare" carried out in Sweden.

Despite this, Sweden continued to register the second target of its antigypsyist policies: the "Zigenare." The last full-scale registration of "Zigenare" was officially carried out in 1962, but social authorities kept registers into the 1980s,[50] and in 2013, it was revealed that the police were still keeping large-scale registers based solely on Romani identity.[51] It must be pointed out, however, that even people who were branded with the "Tattare" label continued to be subjected to systemic discrimination at the local level, for example, through the social services and schools.[52] As recently as 1975, a Swedish newspaper declared that the scientific debate on "Tattare" was settled once and for all. According to the newspaper, it was now definitively determined that the "Tattare" were outcasts, but due to developments within society, the group had now become part of the *folkhemmet* (people's home), that is, the group

46 Socialstyrelsen, "Zigenarnas antal"; Socialstyrelsen, "Tattarnas antal."
47 Etzler, *Zigenarna*, 42.
48 Heymowski, "Swedish 'Travelers'."
49 Socialstyrelsen, "Tattarnas antal"; see also Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.
50 Regeringskansliet, "Mörka och okända historien," 94.
51 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Westin, N. et al., eds., *Antiziganism i statlig tjänst*; Ohlsson al Fakir, "Nya Rum"; SOU 2016:44.
52 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*. See also Vårstrand, "Resandefolket. Vilka är vi?"

had been absorbed and no longer existed.[53] Yet another backlash occurred in the 1990s when ethnologist Birgitta Svensson described the Resande in the tradition of Heymowski but reached the conclusion that crime and antisocial behavior are at the core of Resande identity.[54]

There was another ground-breaking debate that developed in the 1960s that provoked a great deal of discussion. What was unique this time was that it was a Romani woman who took center stage, the author Katarina Taikon. The popular author Ivar Lo-Johansson had taken a strong position against discrimination of "Gypsies" in several books and reports, but at the same time, he claimed that a "Gypsy" who was integrated or otherwise modernized beyond his own exotic view of them, was no longer a "real Gypsy." Katarina Taikon demanded equal social and civil rights as well as the right for Swedish Romani to be part of, and benefit from, the modernization that was in full swing within Sweden.[55] Lo-Johansson questioned Taikon's right to stake out this position, claiming that she was only "half Gypsy" because her mother was non-Romani.[56] But paradoxically, he also identified strongly with the yearning for freedom he associated with the "conceptual Gypsy." In his reporting work, Lo-Johansson said he wanted to challenge himself to live like the "Gypsies," as nineteenth century British gypsylorist George Borrow had done.[57]

Also, the debate between Lo-Johansson and Taikon had a real impact on the lives of everyday people. The 1956 "Zigenare inquiry" had laid the groundwork for a paradigm shift from persecution to, more or less, voluntary assimilation. But the investigation also shows that Lo-Johansson's philoziganism was seen as a real threat: he presented himself as "a friend of the Gypsies" and warned that assimilation would lead to "the Gypsies . . . disappearance as a race, along with their old itinerant culture and their tribal morals."[58] The investigators believed that Lo-Johansson's perspective might send mixed messages to the target group and therefore created targeted campaigns to convey a counter message: only voluntary assimilation would make Roma socially equal citizens in the Folkhemmet.[59] However, the architects of the revamped Roma policy made the major mistake of not involving representatives of the Roma community; instead, the policy was designed and implemented by a growing group of

53 "'Tattarna' på Hall." *Länstidningen*, May 8, 1979.
54 Svensson, "Tattarnas spel med rättvisan."
55 Lo-Johansson, *Zigenare*; Taikon, *Zigenerska*; Taikon, *Zigenare är vi*.
56 Arnstberg, *Svenskar och zigenare,* 85.
57 Lo-Johansson, *Zigenare*.
58 Lo-Johansson, *Zigenare,* 221.
59 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 132–134.

"Gypsy experts."[60] In retrospect, this policy has been condemned as an abject failure and one of the main causes for the pervasive structural antigypsyism in Sweden today.[61]

Interestingly, both Taikon's *Zigenerska* and Lo-Johansson's *Zigenare* were reprinted in 2015. The publisher Bonniers included a tagline saying Lo-Johansson's book offered "a historical perspective on the debate around a people who, even today, are targeted by discrimination," however, with the caveat that his writing represented a "romanticized, outsider's perspective."[62]

In his 2015 book *Romer i Sverige*, ethnologist Arnstberg also weighed in on this debate with a decidedly antigypsyist viewpoint. In his widely cited book *Svenskar och zigenare* from 1998, he had also echoed Grellmann's assertion that "Zigenare" are people who cannot be integrated, and that their "Zigenare culture" itself must be eradicated through forceful assimilation. Arnstberg represents a kind of ethnographic antigypsyism different from the philoziganistic discourse of Lo-Johansson, who, after all, found the "Gypsies" fascinating and argued that they should not be allowed to fully integrate. In his 2015 book, Arnstberg became significantly radicalized and subscribed to the discourses of the Swedish far right. Arnstberg describes his book in the following words:

> Their sense of purity is described and explained, as well how they preserve their way of life. A special chapter is dedicated to the criminal activity of Roma. The beggar invasion Sweden has been exposed to is also discussed in detail, including the EU policy behind it. The book concludes with a critical analysis of the state's costly "victim industry," which onesidedly investigates how racist, prejudiced and discriminatory Swedes treat the Roma.[63]

The first sentence above reveals Arnstberg's essentialism. The two sentences that follow show how he justifies his antigypsyism. The last sentence is a textbook example of secondary antigypsyism: the idea that Roma adopt the role of victims of discrimination which, according to Arnstberg, is non-existent, and thereby become a burden for taxpayers. This line of argument can be likened to the secondary antisemitism that flourished among German nationalists who accused Jews of pursuing a "victim industry" by cultivating Germany's guilty

60 Montesino, "Zigenarfrågan."
61 SOU, 2010:55.
62 Book presentation by the publisher: www.albertbonniersforlag.se (retrieved February 2019).
63 Book description by Arnstberg himself 2015, Debattförlaget (www.debattforlaget.se).

conscience. A variant of this discourse has been expressed by Marushiakova and Popov, who claim that the Roma's "natural interest in its own history" is "suppressed by . . . the system of NGO-science," who, in order to attract money, instead "exploit" research on the Holocaust and Romani discrimination.[64]

Romani Intellectuals Enter the Scene

A growing field of authentic or fictionalized life stories authored by the Romani people of Sweden has started to challenge engrained gypsylorist images of Roma. Artists and authors like Rosa Taikon and Hans Caldaras have been able to make an impact and earn respect for their work as individuals, rather than as representatives of a Romani movement. Shortly after Soraya Post was elected to the European Parliament as a representative of the Feminist Initiative Party, she became a driving force behind the European Parliament resolution on the Roma Holocaust and efforts to combat antigypsyism.[65]

Compared to other countries, however, Romani intellectuals have had a harder time achieving recognition in Sweden. The works of Ian Hancock are a notable exception, but thus far, only a few Nordic Romani academics have been able to position themselves in the field of Romani studies. One reason is that structural antigypsyism poses an obstacle to Romani students in their pursuit of higher education; another reason is that lingering prejudices within academia sometimes hinder and discourage Romani students.[66]

But the problem is also widespread on the international level. In response to these obstacles, a number of Romani networks and platforms have been created to promote Romani education, knowledge production, and cultural practice, which explicitly challenge antigypsyism and gypsylorism by promoting Romani scholarship and Romani cultural work. One of these initiatives is the Digital Archive of the Roma (RomArchive). The RomArchive project described its mission as follows: "While 'hegemonic' archives have almost exclusively portrayed Roma in stereotypical ways, RomArchive focuses on their self-representation. New narratives will emerge, reflecting the heterogeneity of the Roma's diverse national and cultural identities."[67]

64 Marushiakova and Popov, "Orientalism in Romani studies, 14–15.

65 See the biographies of Rosa Taikon, Hans Caldaras and Soraya Post in RomArchive,

66 See Kyuchukov, "Preface"; SOU 2016:44; Ryder et al., eds., "Nothing About Us." See also UHR, *Vad kan den svenska*.

67 RomArchive, Project. https://blog.romarchive.eu/about-romarchive-de-en-rom/. Accessed January 20, 2022.

Some of the scholars and activists working with the RomArchive were also involved in the creation of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), including Romani leaders such as Dr. Nicoleta Bitu and Romani Rose, as well as Romani academics like Tímea Junghaus, Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, and Ethel Brooks. ERIAC, in turn, has received political backing from Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland:

> ERIAC is extremely important, led by Roma people, it will educate and inspire and give Roma a sense of pride. We can look at other oppressed groups and their strategies to liberate themselves. We can look at the workers' movement, the Afro-American civil rights movement. It shows that when a critical mass of blacks entered the universities, then things changed. The same happens with Roma. This is why ERIAC is important . . .[68]

Jagland's statement emanates from an understanding of the field as a decolonizing project that has much to learn from the African-American experience. As the Hungarian-Romani sociologist, director of the CEU Romani Studies Program, Angéla Kóczé put it:

> Romani scholars, in contrast to Black intellectuals, have only recently arrived to the stage when they have to confront and challenge the academic establishment. Right now Romani intellectuals are in a historical moment when they use their epistemic privilege to "speak back" to the dominant cluster of scholars who created discourses and knowledge systems about Roma that objectify them.[69]

Inevitably, this "speaking back," in turn, provoked a reaction in the traditional field of Romani Studies. In a statement in April 2015, also cited by Kóczé, Yaron Matras claimed: "The group seemed to come from nowhere. They had no track record of local leadership, no experience in cultural management, and no academic publications to their names. But they claimed a connection to Romani ancestry and appeared to have powerful friends."[70] The first part

68 Audio recording from ODIHR/ODIHR meeting 2016, in author's possession.

69 Kóczé, "Speaking from the Margins," 86. The term "epistemic privilege" is used within feminist and postcolonial theory to denote the fact that members of marginalized groups hold special keys to the creation of knowledge about their own subordination. It follows from this approach that research on the marginalized should be based on the perspectives of the marginalized.

70 Matras, "European Roma Institute."

of the statement can be summarily refuted by reading through the curriculum vitae of the persons to whom he referred. The second part hints at a form of widespread insecurity in academia where challenges from subaltern voices often result in closing ranks and avoiding self-reflection.

After I published the above findings of this chapter in the peer-reviewed journal *Critical Romani Studies* in 2018,[71] none of the mentioned leading GLS-members responded, except for Yaron Matras. In a widely circulated email he described me as a "young and ambitious scholar who hasn't yet had the good fortune to uncover distant Romani ancestry," and my findings about the GLS 2012 refusal to take historical responsibility "totally fake news."[72]

The Stockholm Compromise

Compared to the meeting in Istanbul in 2012, the backdrop for the Gypsy Lore Society's 2016 meeting and annual conference in Stockholm was quite different. The Swedish state had previously recognized antigypsyism as a widespread societal problem and acknowledged Romani minority rights and the need for inclusion. Södertörn University had been commissioned by the state to deliver higher education programmes to address the rights and needs of Roma.[73] More than 25 Romani mother tongue teachers attended the 2016 conference in their capacity as students at Södertörn University. Within the framework of the students' assignments at the university, participating GLS-scholars were put under the microscope through an interview study of their perspectives, methods, and aims.[74] But at the same time, it is impossible to ignore the conspicuous lack of Romani scholars among the conference speakers. The experience of Istanbul 2012 had not been forgotten, and it was in reaction to that context that the GLS Board adopted the following "compromise resolution" which developed in an agreement between Thomas Acton and Yaron Matras:

> The Board of Directors of the Gypsy Lore Society (GLS)
> 1) Looks back with pride at more than a century of GLS scholarship that has contributed to raising international awareness of the history and cul-

71 Selling, "Assessing the Historical Irresponsibility."

72 Matras, "Critical Romani Studies, or Uncritical Gossip?" open posting on the mail list romani_studies_network@yahoogroups.com, May 17, 2018.

73 It should also be noted that Yaron Matras at an early stage helped move this process forward.

74 Christina Rodell Olgaç, email to the author March 19, 2019.

> ture of the Romani people, and which has set the foundations for what has become a thriving scholarly community devoted to Romani Studies;
>
> 2) Acknowledges that like other institutions, the Society and its publications have not been immune over the past century to occasional statements and attitudes that may be interpreted as overtly patronizing, disenfranchising, or otherwise biased toward the people whose culture was at the center of the Society's attention;
>
> 3) Equally regrets that such statements made decades ago continue to be used by some to try to discredit the Society's work and its efforts to promote engagement with Romani culture today. It considers the undifferentiated denunciatory use of the term "Gypsylorist" to be counterproductive to a fair and open discussion;
>
> 4) Recalls that at her opening speech at the GLS Annual Meeting in Istanbul in September 2012, the President of the GLS, Professor Elena Marushiakova, pointed out how negative stereotypes against Roma go hand in hand with a stigma that is directed at the study of Romani culture. She emphasized that this makes the Gypsy Lore Society an even more crucial space where academic knowledge can be maintained and encouraged. She said: "In the field of Romani Studies, the most important thing that should never be forgotten by all of us is that our research and its impact should not in any way harm the community that we are studying." The GLS Board stands by this statement and remains committed to promoting knowledge of and engagement with Romani communities.[75]

This was not an apology. It is questionable whether anyone would "look back with pride" on this resolution and whether it will serve as a basis for the renegotiation of the GLS's collective identity. First of all, it seems odd to "look back with pride" if it is not paired with a sense of shame for the "overtly patronizing, disenfranchising, or otherwise biased" statements of that past (it is striking that the terms racism and antigypsyism do not even appear in the text). Second, the critical content of the rejected Istanbul motion was diluted into the passive phrase, "have not been immune," which denies the agency of the GLS as producer and distributor of racist ideology. Third, the resolution side-

75 Gypsy Lore Society, Draft Minutes of the 2016 Meeting of the Board of Directors.

steps a self-critique of the GLS's actions by condemning "anti-gypsylorism." Fourth, it is a bit strange that one of the president's statements from Istanbul is included while statements that might be perceived as more problematic are ignored. All in all, it is a resolution that aims to iron out a series of unresolved antagonisms in the interests of shielding the academic ivory tower.

At the end of the conference, the participating Romani students of Södertörn University conveyed their wish that the word "Gypsy" in the name Gypsy Lore Society be replaced with "Roma," but the request remained unheard.[76]

Academic Populism: The Dr. Honoris Scandal

In 2020 Elena Marushiakova was appointed Dr. Honoris Causa at Södertörn University. Against the backdrop of the frustrating experience of the Romani students at the 2016 conference and the declared non-gypsylorist and rights-based approach of the Romani Studies program at Södertörn University, it came as a surprise. The nomination was objected by the complete staff of the then Forum for Romani Studies (now Department of Critical Romani studies) in written and oral communication to the faculty board. The main argument was that Marushiakova was seen as an academic in a gypsylorist tradition with an ethos contrary to that of Södertörn University.

In a letter to the faculty board the staff made clear that they had not been consulted on the matter and clearly distanced themselves from the nomination, because of Marushiakova's aforementioned actions as GLS president at the 2012 and 2016 conferences.[77] The letter was supplemented with an expert opinion by myself about antigypsyist discourses in her research, especially through her contributions to the German school of Tsiganologie which has a clear racist and antigypsyist bias, and in genetic research on Roma, where the main problem is ethnic categorization through DNA.[78] It was also referred

76 Christina Rodell Olgaç, email to the author, March 19, 2019.

77 Working group Forum for Romani Studies at Södertörn University, email to the Faculty board 22 November 2019; available in English at : https://dikko.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Opinion-regarding-the-appointment-of-Professor-Elena-Marushiakova-to-Dr-Honoris-at-So%CC%88deto%CC%88rn-University.pdf .

78 Referred texts with Marushiakova as author or co-author: Kalaydjieva et al., "Patterns"; Martínez-Cruz et al. "Origins"; Marushiakova et al., *Dienstleistungsnomadismus*; Marushiakova, et al., *Zigeuner am Schwarzen Meer*; Marushiakova and Popov, "Between Exoticization and Marginalization." Cf. the critical evaluation of the "Tsiganologie" and DNA-research on Roma in the report of the German Bundestag independent expert commission on antigypsyism: Deutscher Bundestag, "Bericht der Unabhängigen Kommission," chapter 12. For a critique of the *Zigeuner am Schwarzen Meer*; see also Selling, "How to detect antigypsyism".

that the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, which is a strategic partner of Södertörn University, refused cooperation with Marushiakova in the RomArchive because of her involvement in the German Tsiganologie.

This criticism was not public but addressed only to the faculty board with the sole purpose to question the appropriateness of appointing Marushiakova to Dr. Honoris Causa of a university, which, unlike most Romani Studies institutions, has a government assignment for promoting Romani rights. The faculty board chose not to confront Marushiakova with the points made and refused to consult scholarly experts on antigypsyism.

The establishment of the department in 2021 received much media attention. In course of this, the Swedish Romani journal *DIKKO* disclosed that the university had appointed Marushiakova against the advice of the complete Department of Romani Studies. *DIKKO* was also able to publish the aforementioned internal documents, which provided specific references underpinning the allegations of antigypsyism.[79]

The response of Marushiakova could best be described as academic populism: she responded only on social media, largely ignoring the factual issues and instead spreading insults and paving the way for conspiracy theories by asking the question *cui bono*?: "whose interests are behind it?" In a second post, she pursued about the question of who were "the real organizers of this campaign" and described her critics with the remark that "reactionary forces can adopt progressive jargon to outflank more radical politics and that the distance from witch hunting to burning books is only a small step."[80] Whoever is familiar with this discourse of hers knows the direction: George Soros and other funders of "NGO-science" is the mastermind.[81] In this post she also made the important clarification that she refuses to be reviewed by "specialists in 'antigypsyism-research' [sic]," which is odd, since antigypsyism or not is the question. She argued that antigypsyism-research (which she puts in quotation marks) is a marginal academic field. She then lets her "tsiganologist" supporters write in a more uncensored way: antigypsyism research is "masturbation," alternatively "a contagious virus," spreading from Germany and the author of this book is a virus carrier. In a concluding comment on this Facebook-post, liked by Popov and Marushiakova, the Romani journalist who uncovered the dr Honoris-scandal

79 Lundqvist, "Honorary Doctor"; The working group Forum for Romani Studies at Södertörn University, "Opinion," 22 November 2019; Selling, "Additional reflections," 26 November 2019.

80 Facebook page by Marushiakova and Popov, where Marushiakova writes in first person. https://www.facebook.com/veselin.popov.14 , accessed May 31, 2021.

81 See Marushiakova and Popov, "Orientalism in Romani Studies," 14–15.

is described as mentally ill and a "redneck." All these statements remain to date on Marushiakova's Facebook page without being questioned.[82]

November 2021, the scientific journal *Nature* published an article providing evidence of the unethical practice in DNA-research on Roma conducted by teams of natural scientists and ethnographers. The research in Bulgaria, including one of the studies involving Marushiakova,[83] was pointed out as especially problematic.[84]

Concluding Remarks

The end result of the review of scholarly, fictional, and political texts referring to Roma, "Gypsies," and related topics that I present above, is a model for a diachronic analysis of the dimension of positionality in the field of Gypsiology (Tsiganologie), Romani Studies, and Critical Romani Studies.[85] At one end of the scale is the gypsylorist discourse of othering: different variants of romantic, ethnographic, anthropological, and scientific racist discourses on actual Roma and the fictional "conceptual Gypsy." At the other end are Romani subaltern discourses: scholarly, literary, political texts, and emancipatory practices based on Romani discourse positions. In the middle of the spectrum is a growing field of, in the broadest sense, post-colonial and inter-culturally conscious scholarship, "New Romani Studies," which, however, is still dominated by non-Roma to this day.

Another important observation that emerges from this analysis is that the supremacy of gypsylorist discourse has been called into question at different stages in the past, particularly in connection with two turning points: first, during the implosion of scientific racism after the Second World War, and second, through transnational discourses on minority rights, Holocaust remembrance, and historical responsibility at the turn of the millennium.

As I write this book, a growing body of Romani scholars and activists are gaining momentum in political processes around Romani rights as well as in academic debates and new cultural arenas that challenge the hegemony of the antigypsyist past. This is the subaltern challenge of Romani people.

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82 Veselin Popov (and Elena Marushiakova), "Public statement of Professor Elena Marushiakova," Facebook, April 28, 2021 accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/veselin.popov.14.

83 Martinez-Cruz et al., "Origins."

84 Lipphardt et al., "Europe's Roma People"; Imbler, "The DNA of Roma People."

85 I.e. comparison over time of scholarly positions on the topic being studied. See figure 1, on p. 91.

Fundamental debates and antagonisms like the ones analyzed in this study should be closely examined since they both reflect and influence social reality in each historical situation. It is in this context that I understand the debates concerning the Gypsy Lore Society, whether the association should apologize for its historical role in producing, distributing, and legitimizing racist discourses on Roma and other comparable or associated groups. When the motion of an apology was proposed at the 2012 meeting in Istanbul, it was rejected by a majority of the GLS Board, who refused to even acknowledge the problem. In theoretical terms, this proposal represents a failed intervention that ultimately resulted in the maintenance of the gypsylorist tradition. Four years later, at the GLS meeting in Stockholm, a compromise resolution was approved. This compromise glorified the GLS tradition as something to be "proud of" while diminishing the problematic antigypsyist GLS discourses of the past as isolated incidents. Further, the compromise resolution denounced critical interpretations of gypsylorism.

It would be a mistake to regard the reactions of the GLS board as an echo of the past. As I have argued above, the loyalty of GLS traditionalists to the old guard may be a better explanation for these actions. But a stronger reason seems to be that the GLS Board actually reflects the status quo in the field, thus acting as a defender of cultural hegemony. It takes no courage to defend hegemony, but those who question the hegemony run a risk. This is also how I interpret the academically unusual and rhetorically rough-mannered response of Professor Marushiakova as criticism of her gypsylorist approach became public in turn of the Södertörn Dr. Honoris scandal. Perhaps her crudeness was meant as a warning to me and others who dare question her perspective.

Due to structural antigypsyism, only few Roma are able to pass the doors of academia, and those who dare to be critical-minded constantly have to struggle with new gatekeepers and must be prepared to "speak back" loudly if they are going to be heard at all. Roma-led academic initiatives, such as the ERIAC and the CEU Romani Studies Program are hammered down as "NGO-science" or "native science," which is to be understood as something different than "regular" science.[86]

Finally, to paraphrase German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno's thoughts on fascism:[87] as long as we tolerate the conditions that created antigypsyism in its various forms, approaches which aim merely to examine the past will not be successful in dismantling antigypsyism. This certainly applies also to the historiography of Romani Studies.

86 Marushiakova and Popov, "Orientalism in Romani Studies."

87 Adorno, "Was Bedeutet: Aufarbeitung".

Excursus: The Abolition and Aftermath of Slavery

Roma were enslaved in the Christian-dominated provinces of the Ottoman Empire for over 500 years. Through its various mechanisms of dehumanization, Romani slavery was comparable to African American slavery. In these provinces, the Romanian word *Tigan* ("Gypsy") was used interchangeably with the word *robi* (slave). The Romanian state, private landowners, and the church all kept Roma as slaves.[88] Romani people could be owned, sold, and handled in much the same way as livestock. A child of enslaved parents was enslaved from birth. By quoting nineteenth-century Moldovan law, Ian Hancock illustrated the brutal reality for Romani slaves with a description of the difference between slaves and non-slaves: "if a Gypsy slave should rape a white woman, he would be burnt alive . . . but if a Romanian [sic!] should 'meet a girl in the road' and 'yield to love' . . . he shall not be punished at all."[89] As I mentioned above, slavery was finally abolished in the mid-nineteenth century. As Thomas Acton points out, the fact that slavery was abolished in Transylvania first, rather than Moldova or Wallachia, was due to the fact that the province was situated closer to Western Europe and felt the impact of the industrial revolution sooner, which made slavery unprofitable. But an ideological shift was also needed. Slavery had been defended on ideological grounds by both the feudal upper class and the Orthodox Church. With the advent of the industrial revolution, the old guard was now being challenged with liberal slogans inspired by the French Revolution and the founding of the United States. According to the ideology behind these slogans, all human beings are born free. In the midst of the unrest in Bucharest during the 1848 Revolution, students burned official copies of documents governing slavery. The short-lived provisional government declared slavery abolished: "The Romanian people reject the inhumane and barbaric practice of owning slaves and announce the immediate freedom of all Gypsies who belong to individual owners."[90] Slavery was briefly reintroduced when the Russian Turkish Convention overthrew the interim government but was finally abolished when a bill was passed by the Moldovian General Assembly in 1855 and the following year in Wallachia.

88 Woodcock, "Gender, Sexuality and Ethnicity," 176 ff.
89 Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy*, 216.
90 Hancock, *We Are the Romani People*, 24.

In contrast to the enslavement of African Americans, Romanian slavery has not received widespread attention in the media and popular culture or at the political level. After completing an interview survey in 2018, Romanian-Romani student Maria Dumitru concluded that among Romanians of all ages, the history of slavery was astonishingly unknown for both Roma and non-Roma alike. "We never heard about that in school," was a typical response. The interviewees expressed feelings of shame when they were informed about the history of slavery.[91] The survey results reflect the fact that minimal research has been done on slavery and the abolition of slavery in Romania. Important contributions include works of Ian Hancock, Viorel Achim, Adrian Furtuna and Delia Grigore.[92] Harvard scholars and human rights activists Margareta Matache and Jacqueline Bhabha have raised the issue of rectification and compensation based on a discourse of historical justice.[93]

Dumitru's work reveals two important layers of this forgotten history. The first is that the deep-seated racism of many Romanian non-Romani and the depression of Roma could be studied from the perspective of post-traumatic slave syndrome: past cultural trauma embedded in the collective memory of the survivors of the enslaved and their exploiters. This trauma takes on a special significance in Romania, where Roma also fell victim to the Holocaust during World War Two, on Romanian soil, while non-Roma stood idly by or simply looked the other way. The second layer can be likened to what German Jewish author Ralph Giordano once called the second guilt: refusing to face this dark history and instead continuing to repress the descendants of the victims.

In 2007, the Romanian government took a first step towards facing this history by appointing a commission to investigate the history of slavery. In 2011, Parliament declared that February 20 would be a day to commemorate the abolition of Romani slavery. In a memorable gesture in 2016, an individual politician took the initiative to place a memorial

91 Dumitru, "Official Recognition."

92 Hancock, *Pariah Syndrome*; Hancock, *We Are the Romani People*; Achim, *Roma in Romanian History*; Furtuna and Grigore, *Rromii*.

93 Matache and Bhabha, "Roma Slavery." See also Matache and Bhabha, "The Roma Case".

plaque in the Tismana Monastery, which was a reminder of the monastery's history of slave ownership. But as Maria Dumitru points out in her essay, neither the Orthodox Church nor the state has apologized to the Roma or offered any form of compensation. Their enslavement also lacks widespread recognition on the European level. Instead, the memory of this dark history is delicately evoked in the occasional Romanian documentary film and through cultural workers. In 2017, the National Theater in Bucharest premiered the play *The Great Shame* (orig. *Marea Rusine*) on the memorial day for the abolition of slavery. The dialogue around this apparently delicate history points to the problem of suppressed memory. When a student named Magda suggests to her professor that she wants to write her master's thesis on slavery, he replies: "Why is this so important to you?" Magda replies that "there is so little research on the subject, I can help expand the research in this field." The professor shoots the idea down by saying: "That would be too radical for a thesis. You have to decide if you are an academic or an activist."

22. "Allegory of the abolition of slavery" during the Wallachian Revolution, drawing by Theodor Aman.

Chapter 4

Agency, Structures, and Discourses in Romani Liberation

In this chapter I tie together all the pieces I have laid out so far to build a coherent whole and address the book's central questions: What have been the major victories? How have they been achieved? What factors favored or obstructed Romani emancipation and liberation? What still needs to be done?

The purpose of this book is to present knowledge around Romani emancipation and liberation from a historical and international perspective. I also strive to apply Romani perspectives as starting points. To this end, I have used sources from the Roma community and developed my perspectives in research collaboration with Roma. Much like the Swedish Delegation for Romani Issues, I have taken a rights-based perspective, where historical events are considered based on the presumed goal that Roma, like all other human beings, should enjoy full cultural, political, and social rights. Or, to put it another way, Roma should enjoy the right to emancipation. The concept of liberation can stir thoughts of a utopia.[1] The concept is also very difficult to define, since it deals with existential issues. What does it mean to be a free Romani person? What is *Romanipe*? I have not explored these questions in depth because they can only really be answered by someone who identifies as Roma, and they may also be considered outside the scope of historical research. I have nevertheless chosen to include the word liberation in the title of this book, precisely because it represents an ideal—a utopia or a lodestar that gives this history its meaning.

Historiography is not akin to a natural science. Ultimately, it is about creating a meaningful story about the human being in given historical contexts. Different historians may arrive at different answers, all of which can be "equally true." The end result largely depends on the type of questions asked

1 Cf. Raabe et al., "Romatopia."

when exploring the sources you choose to use and the methods applied to construct and interpret the narration. In my own analyses, I have used a combination of perspectives: agency, structure, and discourse. In my approach, I have also chosen to identify historical turning points and to distinguish between different historical periods.

The Agency Perspective

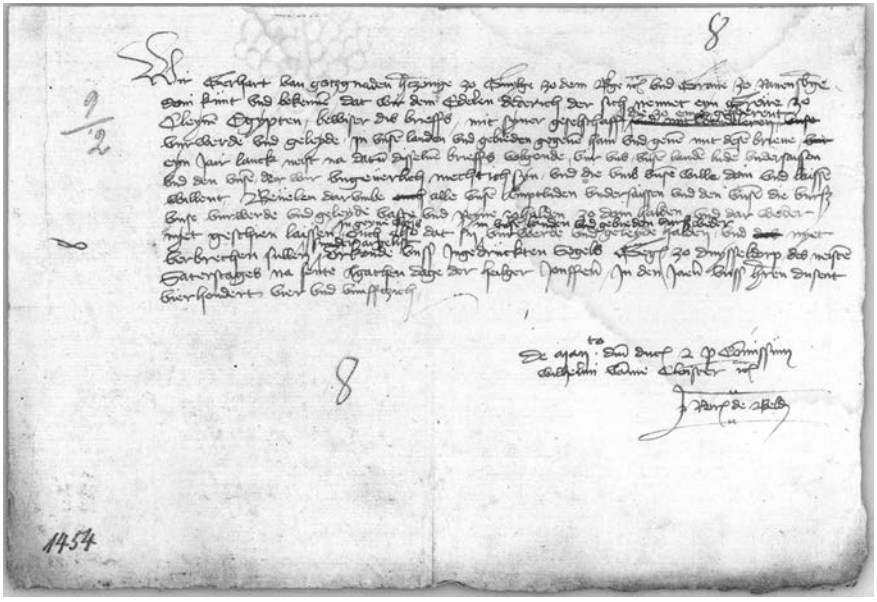
The primary source material available for the study of early history limits our ability to gain insight into the choices and strategic actions of individual Roma. The oldest known records of Roma as individuals come from the Ottoman Empire's tax register from 1430, but these records only reveal social status and, based on the names, religious affiliation.[2] In terms of the struggle for Romani rights in Western Europe, named Roma first appear in medieval letters of safe conduct or in historical documents, such as *Stockholms Tänkebok* (Minutes from the City Council) from 1512. These Romani leaders were dependent on the goodwill of local authorities. We know essentially nothing about the negotiation skills that led to these fleeting victories. Starting in the middle of the seventeenth century, it was common in Poland for the feudal authority to appoint "Gypsy kings" from the Romani groups, who were responsible for collecting taxes, but they were eventually replaced by non-Romani bailiffs.[3]

It was not until the 1900s that Romani political activism gained real momentum. In the 1920s Soviet Union, Romani cultural and political organizations enjoyed a brief moment during which they were allowed to proliferate. This was a period where major investments were made in education, and the activist Alexander German coined the term antigypsyism. From this temporary oasis on the march towards liberation, a small group of highly educated Roma emerged with a vision that, despite the enormous setbacks of Stalinization, had an impact on the Romani movement during the post-war period. Under the rule of the Spanish Republic, Romani artist and Anarcho-Communist Helios Gómez served as cultural commissioner but later ended up serving years in prison during the Franco regime. During the rise of fascism and Nazi rule, Roma took an active part in the resistance struggle and served in the Allied armies. This experience shaped important post-war Romani civil

2 Marushiakova and Popov, *Gypsies in the Ottoman*, 27–30. Cf. Marsh, "No Promised Land."

3 Mirga-Kruszelnicka and Mirga-Wójtowicz, "Movement in Poland."

23. According to the earliest evidence of Romani reaching Sweden, Stockholm's Tänkebok [Minutes from the City Council] September 29, 1512, these Romani were well received. They were offered accommodation and a sum of money by the city. (Stockholms stadsarkiv, SE/SSA/0091/ Borgmästare och råds arkiv fore 1636, volym 9, 169.)



24. An example of a letter of safe conduct, which gave protection to a Romani entourage, issued by Duke Gerhard II of Jülich-Berg, 1454. (Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfahlen, AA 0030 Jülich-Berg I, Nr. 1363, Blatt 8.)

25. The composer of the Romani anthem Gelem Gelem Žarko Jovanović, the founder of *Études Tsiganes*, Matéo Maximoff and the leader of Comité International Rom, Vanko Rouda at a commemoration in Natzweiler 1972. (Photo: Jean-Pierre Liégois.)

26. The founders of the Roma civil rights movement in Finland, Romani Staggos, 1953: Viljo Mäntyniemi, Lempi Isberg (with his son Onni), and Ferdinand Nikkinen.

rights activists, such as Oskar and Vinzenz Rose, Žarko Jovanović, Slobodan Berberski and Matéo Maximoff. In 1950s Paris, a cosmopolitan Romani circle of evangelical pastors, artists, and social revolutionaries emerged, with the magazine *Études Tsiganes* serving as the primary publication for Romani issues. This provided fertile ground for the first international Romani movements and activist organizations, of which the Comité International Tzigane (later the Comité International Rom, CIR) were the most significant. CIR's

campaigns would go on to successfully influence opinion in both the British Government and the Council of Europe.

Meanwhile, in Germany and the Nordic region, it was individual Roma who were able to have a meaningful impact, rather than organized movements. The Rose brothers were behind the legal battle for rectification and compensation, seeking accountability for those responsible for Romani persecution under the Nazis. The cases the brothers brought before the court were ultimately dropped, but their fight paved the way for modern Germany to confront the atrocities of the past. In Sweden, the impetus for political change was fuelled in part by petitions written by Johan Dimiter Taikon and Rupert Bersico. In 1947, it was Ferdinand Nikkinen who successfully inspired Romani in Finland to mobilize against the forced assimilation carried out by the "Gypsy mission," and in 1953, he was also behind the creation of the first independent Romani organization, Romania Liitto—Romanengo Staggos.

27. The first issue of the Gypsy Association's magazine Amé Bescha's - Vi bor, 1965. Note that the same poster is carried by Katarina Taikon (farthest to the front) at the first May Day demonstration the same year.

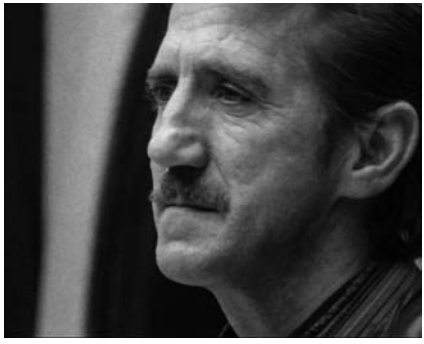
In Norway, it was Reisende/Romani Johan Lauritzen who, through his public testimony on television in 1974, helped mount a successful campaign to put an end to the mission's state-funded camps for cultural deprogramming. The story of Lauritzen is important to highlight, since his contribution up to now has been completely left out in official reports and historiography.[4] Even the Swedish towering figure in the Romani rights struggle, Katarina Taikon, initially had an impact as an individual, before going on to be the face of the movement through her work with The Gypsy Association and its magazine *Amé Beschás—Vi bor* , the May Day demonstration in Stockholm in 1965, and

4 Historian Per Haave, one of the authors of the 2015 expert commission report, notes: "I have no explanation, why Johan Lauritzen has not been given the place that he definitely deserves in this part of the history. I regret that the commission, which I was part of did not give him this. As far as I can remember, nobody mentioned him." Haave, email to author, July 14, 2020; Selling, "Johan Lauritzen."

28. Roma May Day demonstration,1965. (Photo: Björn Langhammer.)

other protests. The Finnish Romani protest movement also intensified in the 1960s and from 1967 gathered around the organization Suomen mustalaisyhdistys (Finnish Gypsy Association) and the magazine *Zirikli*.

During this period, Nordic Romani activism was still isolated from the growing movements on the continent, which, to some extent, were driven forward by the open rivalry between French and British activists. On April 8, 1971, a series of coincidences led to a defining moment in the Romani rights struggle through the organization of the First World Romani Congress in London, where the Romani flag and the Romani anthem "Djelem Djelem" were adopted. Delegates from Eastern Europe were also in attendance. The two primary goals were to garner support for the idea of a pan-Romani identity—the community between Romani groups in all countries—and to become an accepted partner in international bodies such as the UN. But it was not long before this unity faltered, and in 1977, the second World Romani Congress was organized by the breakaway group, the International Romani Union, which in turn split into several competing organizations. The constant splintering and attrition of the international



29. Johan Lauritzen. (Photo: NRK/Vibeke Løkkeberg.)

30. Romani Rose and the president of the European Parliament, Holocaust survivor Simone Veil during a demonstration in Bergen-Belsen, 27 October 1979. (Photo: Friedrich Stark/GfbV Germany.)

movement stands in stark contrast to the course of events in West Germany, where the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma established itself as a stable, influential voice in the 1980s under the leadership of Romani Rose. Even today, the Central Council stands out as a beacon of success compared to its counterparts across Europe.

In Thomas Acton's view, it was fundamentally impossible to reconcile "the streetwise anarchists of western European Romani organizations" with the focus of Eastern European organizations on "cautious cultural manifestations" during the era of state socialism.[5] But as we have seen, there were also rivalries that played out within the Western sphere that are still playing out today, long after the fall of the wall in 1989. Or perhaps the attempts to bureaucratize the movement led to an impasse? Another problem was the unwillingness in some groups to cooperate with others within the larger cluster referred to by the umbrella term "Roma." If the commonalities with other "Roma" would not be considered enough, the very idea of a pan-Romani identity could be called into question.

5 Acton, "Transnational Movements of Roma."

The European Roma and Travelers Forum (ERTF) was created in 2004 on the initiative of the President of Finland, who believed that the Council of Europe needed a dialogue partner with a wide reach. The ERTF was able to bring together groups that had not cooperated in the past and also had the benefit of a network structure that was similar to the social movements of the new era. It operated from the insight that unity is strength, but that cooperation must be based on the principle of the least common denominator, rather than fusing all the parts into a uniform whole. In recent decades, the international Romani movement has been successful when it has worked through networks of professionalized Romani NGOs that seek strategic partnerships with other institutions. As early as 1994, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) created a special secretariat in Warsaw to monitor Romani rights in Europe (Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues). Nicolae Gheorghe took a leading role in this secretariat.

Another example of historical success is the lawyers at the European Roma Rights Center, who defended the rights of Romani based on national laws and international obligations, particularly in Eastern Europe. Yet another example is the networks of Romani leaders, cultural workers, and academics who, in collaboration with the George Soros Open Society Foundation, have established the Romani Studies Program at the Central European University in Budapest and the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) in Berlin.

Roma have also been increasingly taking their places at the political negotiating table, both on the national and international level, as well as in international bodies. More and more, it is women who are stepping up to advocate for Roma. Among these voices are Nicoleta Bitu, Ágnes Daróczi, and Miranda Vuolasranta. In her time in European Parliament, Soraya Post was a driving force behind political alliances that lead to passing resolutions on Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day and the fight against antigypsyism. Thanks in a large part to the academic activism of Ian Hancock, Roma have now been represented in the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since 1997 (see above, chapter 2). Hancock has also paved the way for the next generation of Romani academic activists to carry the torch into the future.

Today, Romani activists often serve in roles as civil servants, politicians, and academics. Those who criticize this development largely reflect the widespread disillusionment with both research and political institutions: there is a lot of talk and little action, and those who speak for the group—Romani representatives in this case—live a life far removed from the reality of ordinary

(Romani) people. This criticism is warranted, at least in part. Despite symbolic victories and resolutions, many Roma in Eastern Europe have soon seen their situation deteriorate, and antigypsyism rears its head again and again throughout Europe. But at the same time, blanket criticism is unfair, as Romani representatives have little power to change structures, but that there nevertheless are actual results that cannot be negated. Simply the fact that more and more Romani voices are being heard in the public discourse is a measure of success. In a number of countries, Roma have also secured better access to schools and education. And as I discussed above, Roma have secured international obligations and forced improvements to national legislation that can serve as a springboard for the ongoing Romani social struggle.

The Structural Perspective

The depiction of this struggle I provide above focuses exclusively on the role that individual Romani persons and organizations played in the history of Romani emancipation and liberation. The contexts that frame their actions and thinking can be depicted as structures. By extension, the concept of structural antigypsyism assumes that culture holds latent structures that are hostile to Romani and other people who fit the description of the "Gypsy" template; but there are also social, economic, and legal structures that restrict the opportunities of Roma. A structural approach to Romani emancipation would thus be about transforming the cultural, social, legal, and economic conditions to increase equality and freedom for Roma.

Migration itself has been a source of liberation, namely, migration from a place with unsustainable structures to a place that promises a better future, regardless of whether this means freedom from persecution or opportunities to enhance one's livelihood. The first stop the Romani people made at the southeastern brink of Europe, about one thousand years ago, offered the promise of a better life. Roma possessed skills that were in demand, and the largely decentralized power structure of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire had no interest in persecuting the group. Instead, many Roma settled in the empire and became tax-paying citizens, regardless of whether they were Muslim or Christian. Still, in some economically deprived provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the Roma lived in serfdom and were enslaved for 500 years. From a structural perspective, slavery was primarily abolished because of the rise of capitalism, which made it more profitable to streamline labor than maintain a

workforce of enslaved. The abolition of Roma slavery began in 1790 with the advent of the industrial revolution in the province that had the closest economic ties to Central Europe, Transylvania. Emancipation was not complete until it reached the other Romanian provinces over half a century later, around the same time African American slavery was abolished in the United States. Over the short term, the abolition of slavery resulted in a wave of migration to the north and west, as the formerly enslaved hoped to find a better life by moving away from their former exploiters. In some cases, this migration resulted in success, and Roma carved out a niche and a new existence for themselves. But as was the case in the Ottoman Empire, the Roma may have only received a relatively warm reception where their skills were in demand, whether it be as soldiers, artisans or peasants. This held true across Europe, including the Nordic countries. But all too often, the Romani people were driven out and forced to move from place to place, creating the perception that Roma were nomads, which led to conflict with the static nature of medieval society. Slavery was a dark period that settled into the collective consciousness of both the descendants of the exploiters and the enslaved, which may be one explanation for the extreme racism and racialization of poverty in southeastern Europe today; and perhaps, over the long term, it is also behind the current prevalence of Romanians and Bulgarians begging in the wealthy Nordic countries.

Both the Catholic and Lutheran churches have a long history of reinforcing antigypsyism in their words and actions. This is one reason Christian Roma sought out free churches in the twentieth century, which not only provided sanctuary and inclusion, but sometimes played an active role in the Romani civil rights struggle, for example, the Pentecostal church in France of the 1950s. Another exacerbating factor in the struggle for Romani rights was the emergence of nation states. From the seventeenth century onwards, Roma would see their very right to exist called into question in country after country, and they were seldom granted citizenship, except for those groups who were reluctantly included in the national collective through assimilation. During the nineteenth century, the idea that each country should represent one nationality was strengthened across nation states, which was often interpreted in practice as mono-ethnicity. Even the Ottoman Empire, which would become Turkey, was affected by this trend. The Turkish core of the former empire adopted a Turkish identity, while the provinces in the Balkans cultivated their own ideas of national identity. In this era of picking teams, Roma were left off the playing field. Before the catastrophic effects of World War Two, internationalist socialism seemed to leave the door open to Romani liberation. Minority

emancipation was a targeted program under the Soviet national minority policy experiment of the 1920s. The program clearly had positive results for Roma, not least in the promotion of the Romani written language and investment in education. But in the 1930s, Stalin introduced a purely nationalist policy. Post-war Yugoslavia was also a predominately multinational state that provided space for Romani liberation both in terms of Romani culture and social aspects. The contrast between the above examples and the other Eastern states, which were built on "one people, one country," is striking. In these countries, there was no room for Roma to organize. Instead, Roma were subjected to a variety of forced assimilation policies. When the socialist systems in Eastern Europe collapsed starting in 1989, it created new opportunities for Roma to organize. But at the same time, the social situation deteriorated precipitously, and mass unemployment and poverty hit Roma harder than any other group, which in turn led to deteriorating health and education conditions. In addition, Roma were exposed to a greater degree to a new wave of discrimination and racism. In the former Yugoslavia, Roma were scapegoated and subjected to massive violence.

In response to this alarming trend, Romani activists have been working since the 1990s to develop an effective international network structure to respond to the demands of social activism in this modern era, while also setting their sights on lobbying efforts and alliances with important institutions. This strategy has proved to be effective in cases when the Council of Europe and the EUs have prioritized the value of human rights, minority issues and social justice. For example, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has led to the recognition of the Roma as national minorities in a growing number of member states, and Roma have been able to invoke their civil rights in member states based on national commitments to comply with EU guidelines.

But at the same time, there is a growing divide within Europe. The contrast between member states is stark. The rich countries in the north have long been striving towards a goal where all citizens get a piece of the pie. In these countries, the social issues of the past seemed to be resolved, in theory, and Romani policy has turned towards cultural issues. While in neo-capitalist Eastern Europe, Romani policy has more to do with access to health care, clean water, and schools. But progress faltered once again when the northern social welfare states and the European single market were rocked by a series of crises and the re-emergence and proliferation of right-wing populism. The social agenda has lost momentum at the EU level, while the modern EU, with

its guarantee of freedom of movement, means that the rich countries in the north cannot simply turn a blind eye to extreme poverty, which affects the Roma in particular. In certain respects, the continent's development is sliding backwards. But what would be the most important change we can make today? In his keynote address at the 2013 international conference in Uppsala "Antiziganism—What's in a Word?" Ian Hancock said that "education is the passport to freedom."[6] People with good education have better health, better success in the labor market and are better able to assert their rights, and this applies to both individuals and collectives. But it is this very social vulnerability that limits Romani access to education and other opportunities. Education is thus both the problem and the solution.

The Discourse Perspective

If discourse is understood as people's approach to reality, hereby we can refer to the ideas and actions of a particular agent, for example, a Romani activist, in a particular historical situation. If you can connect this to similar discourses of other agents, and they point in the same direction, you can talk in terms of a discourse formation. If yet another agent appears who talks about the same thing but points in the opposite direction of the dominant discourse or calls into question the very description of the thing, one can talk in terms of a counter discourse.

If we apply this to society as a whole, we can see that in any given historical situation, there are certain discourses that are considered normal or natural. These are sometimes described as the dominant spirit of the times, culture, hegemony, or dominant discourse formations. At the same time, there are always some discourses that are considered aberrant, unnatural, alternative, or even dangerous. Discourse formations can be more or less elastic and permissive. Agents may have leeway to create free zones. If any major imbalances and contradictions are created, dominant conceptions can be overturned through counter discourses. One example of this is how the scientific view of the world challenged and then gradually replaced the creation myth as the dominant discourse.

In the history I have outlined in this book so far, we have seen how dominant discourses either prevented Romani emancipation and liberation or created space for the advancement of Romani rights. For example, the multi-eth-

6 Hancock, "Keynote Address", xxii.

nic character of Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire allowed Roma to develop Romani cultural identities, but at the same time, the Ottoman Empire allowed Romani to be enslaved. In medieval Catholic Northern and Western Europe, Roma, much like the Jews, came to be regarded as outsiders, and their freedom, or lack thereof, was dependent upon how they were judged in relation to the tenets of Christianity: the German Holy Roman Empire declared in 1498 that Roma were enemies of Christianity and should be treated as such, while individual princes saw Roma as pilgrims, or for purely pragmatic reasons, took Roma into their service or collected taxes from them. The emergence of nation states in the 1800s would have a major impact on Romani, including restrictions on freedom of movement. As nation states were justified by nationalist ideology, the very right of Roma to exist was questioned even within the nations in which they lived. When nationalism became increasingly charged by racial biology, the human value of Roma was called into question.

The first time Roma had the opportunity to outwardly articulate discourses on Romani identity and rights was within the framework of the 1920s Soviet *korenizatsyia* policy experiments. Since the official communist ideology claimed that all social issues had been resolved, the *korenizatsyia* policy aimed to address cultural issues, such as raising awareness, but also to counter antigypsy attitudes, which were claimed to be a remnant of Tsarist Russia. During the rise of fascism and Nazi rule, many Roma were politicized and took an active role in the resistance. While the Soviet Union had already departed from its policy of elevating minorities, post-war Yugoslavia became the state that most clearly declared its support for Romani rights. This was a consequence of the Titoist principle of multiethnicity and the recognition of Romani participation in the partisan struggle. In West Germany, confronting the Nazi past also laid the foundation for the establishment of the civil rights movement. The 1970s intergenerational conflict in West Germany over the atrocities committed under Nazi rule created a social climate within which the Sinti and Roma movement could gain momentum based on a discourse of historical justice: recognition of the Romani genocide and the right to compensation. This discourse also strengthened the ability of the German Sinti and Roma civil rights movement to demand social rights and fight ongoing discrimination. Much like the rest of Eastern Europe, the fight for civil rights in Germany suffered a setback when the wall fell in 1989 and a new wave of nationalism and racism was unleashed.

Over the last few decades, the international Romani movement has simultaneously pursued two discourses: first, the cultivation of an idea of a common pan-Romani identity as a form of nationalism without a nation, and sec-

ond, a civil rights struggle that has increasingly latched on to international discourses on human rights and freedom. These two discourses have not had strictly defined boundaries and have been able to accommodate a wide range of different viewpoints. In a way, the notion of a pan-Romani identity has been established through the use of internationally recognized symbols, such as International Romani Day, the Romani flag and the Romani anthem, "Djelem Djelem." This has also been accompanied by manifestations of Romani culture geared towards the majority society, which have sometimes challenged stereotypes and sometimes deliberately stylized and homogenized Romani (or Gypsy/Traveller/Resande/Tater/Romani) culture; in other words, it has utilized strategic essentialism. It should be noted, however, that attempts to create representative pan-Romani institutions have not always been successful. Since the 1990s, Romani NGOs have increasingly sought to gain influence within international bodies by cooperating on the principle of the least common denominator and concrete policy rather than trying to put together a cohesive whole from the various parts of the movement. This strategy has also required close cooperation with non-Romani actors. The critique of this approach is that the Romani NGO movement has become a tool for the powers that be and has lost touch with the roots of the movement: the reality ordinary Roma face every day. The implication of this critical perspective is that Romani themselves must create the discourse for their own liberation and not be content with being formally included in a subordinate, consultative role. This line of thought is not necessarily based on ethnic separatism, but it proceeds from the fundamental notion that political discourses concerning the liberation of Romani cannot be conducted without the direct involvement of Roma. The inspiration comes mainly from the African American civil rights movement, feminism, and critical, postcolonial theories on racism and subordination. Within academia, this counter discourse is called Critical Romani Studies. According to perspectives within this field of study, the scholarly reconnection to the everyday lives of "ordinary Roma" must occur through and utilize Romani experiences, for example, through action research and consciousness raising in the spirit of Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy.[7] Therefore, education and knowledge production are the central components for Romani emancipation and liberation also when approached from a discourse perspective. Following Freire's reasoning, educational initiatives are also needed for non-Roma if the structural oppression of the majority society is to ever be abolished.

7 Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

This includes the combatting of antigypsyist thinking: antigypsyism is to be seen as both a mentality and an ideology that is doing harm to people. Antigypsyism as ideology has in the course of centuries been developed by intellectuals of the churches and the universities. The discourse of "Gypsyology" was the basis for the "Gypsy experts," who administrated everything between assimilation and genocide, and still has a large influence on the way Romani people are being characterized, in the sense of putting the blame of Romani subordination on themselves. It is said that it is rooted in Romani culture to steal, beg, and not to attend school. Gypsyology still has a firm grip of Romani studies. One example presented in the previous chapter is the appointment of a gypsyologist as Dr. Honoris Causa at Södertörn University in 2020. The deciding commission had no bad intention and only saw the impressive production of a scholar, but they did not see the antigypsyism, since they saw no necessity of applying an antigypsyism-critical perspective. No doubt, the burden of proof is set extraordinarily high for antigypsyism, since it seems indeed to be "the last acceptable form of racism."[8] However, also here a turn may be in sight, since both the Council and Europe and the EU are now shifting their strategies towards acknowledging antigypsyism as a root cause for societal challenges and also representatives of Romani civil society have signalled that this shift is necessary, since inclusion without combatting antigypsyism seems to have been a dead end.[9]

Excursus: "Djelem Djelem" (Gelem Gelem)

Original version by Žarko Jovanović[10]	English version[11]
Gelem, gelem, lungone dromensa	*I went, I went on long roads*
Maladilem bakhtale Romensa	*I met happy Roma*
A Romale, katar tumen aven,	*O Roma, where do you come from,*
E tsarensa bakhtale dromensa?	*With tents happy on the road?*
A Romale, A Chavale	*O Roma, O Romani youths!*

8 McGarry, *Romaphobia*.
9 Council of Europe, "Dialogue with Roma and Traveller," 29–30 April 2021.
10 "Romani Anthem", Wikipedia, accessed January 20, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_anthem.
11 "Romani Anthem", Wikipedia, accessed January 20, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_anthem.

Sas vi man yekh bari familiya,	*I once had a great family,*
Mundardyas la e Kali Legiya	*The Black Legion murdered them*
Aven mansa sa lumnyake Roma,	*Come with me, Roma from all the world*
Kai putardile e Romane droma	*For the Roma, roads have opened*
Ake vriama, usti Rom akana,	*Now is the time, rise up Roma now,*
Amen khutasa misto kai kerasa	*We will rise high if we act*
A Romale, A Chavale	*O Roma, O Romani youths!*
Puter Devla le parne vudara	*Open, God, White doors*
Te shai dikhav kai si me manusha	*So I can see where are my people.*
Pale ka zhav lungone dromendar	*Come back to tour the roads*
Thai ka phirav bakhtale Romensa	*And walk with happy Roma*
A Romalen, A chavalen	*O Roma, O Romani youths!*
Opre Rroma, si bakht akana	*Up, Romani people! Now is the time*
Aven mansa sa lumnyake Roma	*Come with me, Roma from all the world*
O kalo mui thai e kale yakha	*Dark face and dark eyes,*
Kamav len sar e kale drakha	*I want them like dark grapes*
A Romalen, A chavalen.	*O Roma, O Romani youths!*

The international Romani anthem was adopted at the First Romani World Congress in London in 1971 and has, along with the Romani flag, become the strongest symbol of a pan-Romani identity: a common Romani identity that unifies the differences between all Romani groups. The lyrics were written by the Serbian Rom Žarko Jovanović and set to a traditional melody and was performed in 1949 on Yugoslav radio. The anthem is sometimes called "Opre Roma!" (Rise up Roma!). But the most common title of the anthem is "Djelem Djelem," which can be written in a number of different ways. It can differ between different Romani dialects, but variations in spellings are also due to the fact that the original was written in Cyrillic letters by the original text author. There are also a number of different versions and alternate verses. The musical expression can also vary significantly. The original lyrics, which were taken from the English-language Wikipedia page, do not correspond to what is claimed

to be the version sanctioned in London in 1971, according to the Council of Europe's *Factsheets on Roma History*.[12] The latter version lacks the closing verse, "Opre Roma."

Ethnomusicologist Petra Gelbart has described these variations as "a microcosm of the diversity," precisely because the Romani anthem provides a perfect opportunity for different Romani groups in different political contexts to fine tune the meaning of the anthem by altering the lyrics and musical expression. In her essay, which can be found on RomArchive, Gelbart also asks how widely accepted the anthem really is.[13] The answer to that question reflects different views on the notion of a pan-Romani identity and Romani nationalism. Gelbart quotes the German Costa Rican emigrant Federico "Fred" Hoffman, who said: "I sincerely do not believe that one day we will have our own country, but we must still look forward in order to achieve at least some self-respect and independence as a minority. I am sure that being united worldwide will help us."[14] In light of this viewpoint, other groups included under the umbrella term Roma, but who reject the idea of a pan-Romani identity, say that the song is not their anthem, including many German Sinti. Other groups may see themselves as Roma, but like the Hungarian Roma, they have their own anthem, or they have simply never heard of the anthem. Gelbart also quotes a Russian Israeli Romani activist, who emphasises that "Djelem Djelem" sends an important message to the outside world: "When non-Roma hear it, they understand more about who we are."[15]

12 Wogg, "Institionalisation and Emancipation."
13 Gelbart, "Romani Anthem."
14 Gelbart, "Romani Anthem."
15 Gelbart, "Romani Anthem."

Chapter 5

Romani Emancipation in Sweden: A Historical Overview

In the previous chapters I have already provided many examples from the Swedish history and also given insight in Swedish Romani studies historiography. Thereby, I have indicated that the Swedish experience cannot be understood as an isolate. In this section, I deepen the understanding of how this development in the European periphery may give a different perspective on the overall development and what reciprocal lessons can be learned.

The history of the emancipation of the Romani people in Sweden during the twentieth century must be understood in the context of the post-war social-democratic welfare state project, Sweden's entry into the EU in 1995, and the rapidly expanding diversity of Romani groups in Sweden since the 1970s.

Roma, including the Resande (Swedish travelers), were declared a Swedish national minority in 1999, along with Sami, Tornedalers, Jews, and Swedish Finns, when Sweden ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The Romani national minority was further defined under five groups based on the historical periods of their first arrival in Sweden: Resande, Swedish Roma, Finnish Roma, non-Nordic Roma, and recently arrived Roma. The division into these five groups does not capture the true diversity of the Romani people in Sweden, and there are other boundaries and overlaps between these groups. Today, well over twenty variants of Romani Chib are spoken in the country, and the Romani population is estimated to be between 50,000 and 100,000.[1] In the struggle for Romani emancipation in Sweden, people from all of these groups have played

1 Estimate of the Roma population in Sweden according to the website on national minorities, www.minoritet.se, which the Sametinget (Sami Parliament) runs on assignment from the government. The Swedish Language Council, which has a special responsibility to support national minority languages, designates the five Romani varieties in Sweden as Arli, Kalderaš, Kale, Lovara and Svensk Romani. www.sprakochfolkminnen.se.

a significant role. The groups have sometimes had different agendas, but more often than not, they share common goals.

Historical Background

As the probably first group of Roma on September 29, 1512 arrived in Stockholm, they were thought to have come from "Little Egypt." There were thirty families and their spokesperson was called Count Antonius. They were well received in Stockholm and were provided accommodation. There is not much more that is not known about this group, but several parties from the same lineage seem to have made their way to Sweden. This immigration is often considered the origin of the Resande. In the following centuries, Roma were excluded from Swedish society by both the state and the church, although there were a few notable exceptions to this otherwise dark history, and the peasant population sometimes had a more positive view of Romani people.[2] The very fact that Roma have lived in Sweden from the time Count Antonius and his entourage arrived until the present day is evidence that the historical picture has not always been uniform. Due to centuries of persecution, the language of Swedish Romani, or Scandoromani, is now an endangered language in urgent need of revitalization.[3]

A number of these original Roma were expelled to the Finnish part of the Swedish Empire, where they remained after Finland became part of the Russian Empire in 1809. This is the historical context for the familial ties that span many generations of Swedish Resande and Finnish *Kale* Roma.[4] There is a great deal of historical evidence to suggest that there was often a good relationship between the non-Romani rural population and the Romani groups.[5] There are also accounts from the beginning of the seventeenth century of Roma being permitted to settle and engage in handicrafts and trade in cities, as well as Roma being recruited into the Swedish Army.[6] However, these positive examples of coexistence were highly localized or only came about as a result of temporary, pragmatic decisions. The state and the Protestant Church

2 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.

3 Some linguists define Scandoromani as "Para-Romani" in the sense that it is a language of Romani origin with strong influences of Swedish grammar and pronunciation. See, e.g., University of Manchester's ROMANI Project, http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/.

4 Pulma, *De finska romernas historia*.

5 Tervonen, "'Gypsies', 'Travellers' and 'Peasants'"

6 Hazell, *Resandefolket*; Tervonen "'Gypsies', 'Travellers' and 'Peasants'"; Minken, *Tatere i Norden*.

of Sweden generally maintained a hostile posture towards the Romani people throughout the nation's history.[7]

At the end of the nineteenth century, other groups of Romani immigrated to Sweden by way of Russia—Kalderash, Lovari and Tjurari—groups with roots in the provinces of Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldova, where many Roma had previously been enslaved.[8] In Swedish minority legislation, Roma whose ancestors immigrated during this period are called Swedish Roma.[9]

From the 1920s to the 1950s, policies relating to the Swedish Roma and the Resande were dictated by nationalism and racial biology. The border was officially closed to Roma immigration from 1914 to 1954. By extension, this also meant that Swedish Roma and Resande were prevented from travelling abroad to visit relatives. This policy ultimately had dire consequences when Roma seeking protection from Nazi rule were denied entry. There are only two cases known of Romani Holocaust survivors who managed to enter Sweden at the end of the war: Hanna Dimitri and Sofia Taikon.[10] Likewise, Norway also closed its borders to Roma between 1933 and 1956.[11]

Within Sweden, antigypsyist policies had a two-pronged strategy. Resande, or more specifically, people labelled "Tattare," were deemed to be inherently asocial due to "racial mixing" and were persecuted through forced assimilation, forced sterilization and forced removal of children from the care of their families. Swedish Roma, officially referred to as "Gypsies" ("Zigenare"), were seen as foreigners and denied all social and civil rights, including the right to housing and schooling. The stated purpose was to consistently make conditions so poor for Roma that they would decide to leave the country on their own.[12]

The Roma immigration ban was ultimately lifted in connection with the establishment of the Nordic Passport Union in 1954. This was the result of a 1951 government inquiry that determined that discrimination directed against the "Gypsies" would henceforth be deemed unacceptable:

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7 See Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.

8 See chapter 1.

9 Sveriges Riksdag, "Regeringens proposition 1998/99:143." The recognition of minority status occurred in connection with the ratification of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Swedish Government on January 13, 2000. Utrikesdepartementet, "Sveriges internationella överenskommelser").

10 Selling, "Romani resistance"; Kalander, *Min mor fånge Z-4517*; Lundgren and Taikon, *Sofia Z-4515*.

11 Rosvoll, Lien, and Brustad, *'Å bli dem kvit'*.

12 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Regeringskansliet, *Den mörka och okända historien*.

> In the committee's view, such discrimination of an alien, based solely on affiliation with a particular race, cannot be considered to be in accordance with the Swedish conception of justice, and the committee has therefore not included this as grounds to refuse entry in its proposal. . . . No special rules shall therefore apply to Gypsies; they shall be treated the same as other aliens.[13]

Much like other Finns, a large number of Finnish Roma now settled in Sweden, as the labor market was much more attractive than in Finland. When *Stockholms Finska Zigenarförening* (Stockholm's Finnish Gypsy Association) was founded in 1972, the number of Finnish Roma in Sweden was already greater than the number of Swedish Roma.[14]

During the 1970s, a limited number of Lovari, Kalderash, Romungri, and Tjurari were allowed to immigrate from Yugoslavia, former Czechoslovakia, and Poland.[15] This group is now officially called non-Nordic Romani.

During the 1990s, several thousand Romani were granted asylum in Sweden when war broke out in the former Yugoslavia. These "recently arrived Roma" mainly came from Arli, Ghurbeti, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian groups.[16] After Sweden's entry into the EU in 1995, it became possible for Romani from all EU member states, at least in theory, to settle in Sweden.[17] After the turn of the millennium, it was increasingly rare for Roma from former Yugoslavia to be granted asylum. Romani refugees were instead referred to the internal flight alternative (IFA), i.e., relocating to an area in their home country, despite reports of continued abuses against Roma in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo.[18]

Early Romani Activism in Sweden

As early as 1933, the spokesman for the Swedish Kalderash Roma, Johan Dimitri Taikon, wrote a petition to the National Swedish Board of Education. He demanded that the right of Romani children to schooling be recognized,

13 SOU 1951:42, 191.
14 Nordström, "Från socialpolitiska flyktingar."
15 SOU 2010:55, 159–161.
16 SOU 2010:55, 114–115.
17 2010:55, 167.
18 SOU 2010:55, 127–128; cf. Motion to Swedish Riksdag 2004/05:Sf322 by Kalle Larsson et al. (left party), "Romer i asylprocessen" [Roma in the asylum process], which criticized the policy of uniformly denying the entry of Kosovo Roma to Sweden.

a demand that would not be realized for years to come. He also offered to act as an intermediary between the Roma and the Swedish state in all matters concerning the rights and obligations of the Roma:

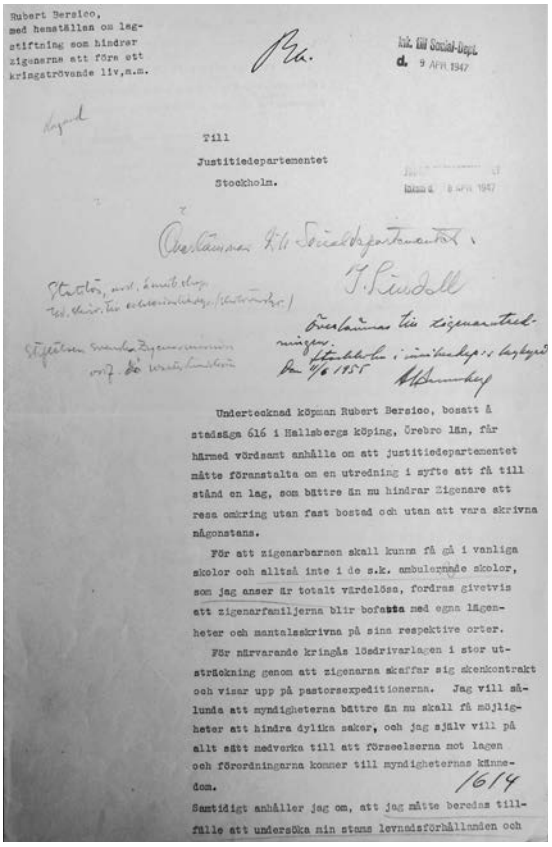
> I have sent a proposal to his Royal Majesty about introducing a Gypsy bailiff position. This hypothetical bailiff would, of course, need to be someone from the Gypsies' own ranks, someone who has extensive knowledge of the group, [and] has their trust and respect. I thus propose myself for this position, not out of conceit . . . but out of interest in the matter and the knowledge that suitable candidates are unfortunately rare . . . I would be willing to travel and monitor compliance with school regulations while functioning as an intermediary between the government and the Gypsies.[19]

Taikon's proposal was flatly rejected by the state, but he did not stop there. He followed up with a number of petitions and finally managed to push through a pilot project for the education of Romani children living in the Lilla Sköndal camp. The project was implemented in 1943 and lasted for three months.[20] The real benefit of the pilot project was that a number of government officials were now convinced that Swedish Roma actually wanted their children to attend school.[21]

In 1947, another, lesser-known Romani activist, Rupert Bersico, entered the stage in the fight for Romani rights. In his petition to the Ministry of Justice, he demanded a comprehensive inquiry into the situation of the Swedish Roma. He argued

31. Johan Dimitri Taikon. (Photo: Carl Herman Tillhagen/Nordiska museet.)

19 Taikon, "Letter to Bishop."
20 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*,129.
21 SOU 1956:43, 50–53.



Rubert Bersico,
med hemställan om lagstiftning som hindrer zigenarna att föra ett kringströvande liv, m.m.

Kgl. Maj:ts Social-Dept.
d. 9 APR. 1947

Till
Justitiedepartementet
Stockholm.

Underteckknad köpman Rubert Bersico, bosatt å stadsägn 616 i Hallsbergs köping, Örebro län, får härmed vördsamt anhålla om att justitiedepartementet måtte föranstalta om en utredning i syfte att få till stånd en lag, som bättre än nu hindrar Zigenare att resa omkring utan fast bostad och utan att vara skrivna någonstans.

För att zigenarbarnen skall kunna få gå i vanliga skolor och alltså inte i de s.k. ambulerande skolor, som jag anser är totalt värdelösa, fordras givetvis att zigenarfamiljerna blir bofasta med egna lägenheter och mantalsskrivna på sina respektive orter.

För närvarande kringås lösdrivarlagen i stor utsträckning genom att zigenarna skaffar sig skenkontrakt och visar upp på pastorsexpeditionerna. Jag vill således att myndigheterna bättre än nu skall få möjligheter att hindra dylika saker, och jag själv vill på allt sätt medverka till att förseelserna mot lagen och förordningarna kommer till myndigheternas kännedom.

Samtidigt anhåller jag om, att jag måtte beredas tillfälle att undersöka min stams levnadsförhållanden och

32. Rupert Bersico's letter to the Ministry of Justice, 1947. (Swedish National Archives.)

that the "Gypsy schools" in the camps were completely ineffective and that the Roma must be granted a path to permanent resident status. He argued in support of special Romani housing projects, as well as for repressive measures to prevent vagrancy, and offered his services as the supervisor of such a program.[22]

This push for Romani rights would also fall short, but slowly but surely, the time would be ripe for change. Some of Bersico's proposals would ultimately be tabled in a motion in the Second Chamber of the Riksdag by the Communist Party of Sweden, but in a different package. An inquiry was proposed to investigate the situation of the Roma, but the most remarkable thing about the motion was that for the first time, it made demands for a systematic fight against antigypsyism, or "racial discrimination against Gypsies," in the

22 Bersico, "Letter to the Ministry."

language used at the time. The motion was tabled with reference to scientific research showing that the cause of the Romani social misery was not cultural or biological, but their exclusion from school, housing, and other rights. The motion had been written with the help of social physician John Takman, who had carried out extensive studies into the Romani health situation. Takman concluded that the exclusion policy was the main determinant of the health status of the Roma in Sweden, which was catastrophic in comparison to the majority population.[23]

The Social Democrats, who governed the country at the time, responded to the demand by appointing a "Gypsy inquiry." The demand to fight antigypsyism went unanswered, but for the first time, an inquiry had been initiated on Romani issues that did not aim to exclude and expel Roma. The stated goal was instead to bring the Swedish Roma into the social welfare system, which was popularly known as the *folkhemmet* (the people's home).

The main impetus for this move was that the repressive policy had failed: despite forty years of systematic reprisals, the Roma had not been forced out of the country. Instead, the plight of the approximately 700 Swedish Roma had become a disgrace that did not coincide with the ideals of the Swedish folkhemmet: equality, general welfare, and modernity. Roma were promised full citizenship and the recognition of Romani social rights, including housing and schooling. It must be emphasized, however, that the inquiry and the political promises completely disregarded the existence and needs of the much larger Romani group, the Resande.[24]

Centuries of openly repressive antigypsy politics had come to an end. But the new reality that emerged was a policy of assimilation that still did not recognize the Roma as equal interlocutors. No measures were taken to put an end to the ongoing discrimination suffered by Roma and the widespread antigypsyism within all levels of government as well as the public. In general terms, the new policy did not live up to the goals that had been set. It was against this background that a new brand of Romani activism emerged in the 1960s.

23 Sveriges Riksdag, "Motion i andra kammaren 1953." See also SOU 1956:43, 47; Selling *Svensk antiziganism*, 70–71. For more information on Takman's commitment to the Roma cause, see Ohlsson Al Fakir, "John Takman."

24 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism,* 152.

The Significance of Katarina Taikon

The significance of author and activist Katarina Taikon in the civil rights struggle of Swedish Roma cannot be overstated.[25] Her message about Romani rights was also heard beyond Sweden's borders, especially in Finland. Taikon herself had been denied schooling as a child and only learned to read and write after reaching adulthood. And against all odds, she became one of the most notable writers of the 1960s. In her autobiographical books *Zigenerska* (Gypsy woman) and *Zigenare är vi* (We are gypsies), she effectively challenged prevailing stereotypes and demanded an end to systematic discrimination, but she also directed her criticism towards patriarchal patterns within the Kalderash group itself, such as its acceptance of forced marriage.

33. Katarina Taikon's book *Zigenare är vi* [We are gypsies], 1967. Stockholm: Tiden.

With her exceptional intellect and unwavering resolve, hers was just the voice that was needed when the time came to fight for full recognition of Romani rights in Sweden. Video clips bear evidence of how incredibly fearless and direct she was in debates with leading politicians like Prime Minister Tage Erlander, Minister of Finance Gunnar Sträng, and Minister of Education Olof Palme. For Taikon, this was a secular and inclusive struggle: she fought not only for the rights of her own group, but for the rights of other vulnerable Romani groups. She was driven by a fight for human rights and drew inspiration from other struggles like the African American civil rights movement. This approach won her allies in the majority society, who also saw parallels between the treatment of Swedish Roma and racial oppression in South Africa and the Southern United States. Evert Kumm was one of these allies. The back cover of his 1965 publication *Zigenare och vanliga svenskar. Fakta om*

25 Taikon, *Zigenerska* and Taikon, *Zigenare är vi*; Caldaras, *I betraktarens ögon*; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Mohtadi, *Katarina Taikon*.

34. The Romani delegation led by Katarina Taikon, together with the social physician John Takman, petitioned Prime Minister Tage Erlander in 1964. (Photo: Björn Langhammer / KB.)

en s.k. raskonflikt [Gypsies and ordinary Swedes. Facts about the so-called race conflict] exposed a quote taken from the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) magazine, *Fackföreningsrörelsen*, which also captures this idea:

> As a whole, the Gypsy issue in our country, despite their small number, is still a big issue. It should be important for us Swedes, who are so happy to protest against racial fanaticism and discrimination in other parts of the world, especially in South Africa but also in the United States, that we finally take care of our own back yard.[26]

John Takman shared a similar line of thinking, and in 1964, this trio founded Zigenarsamfundet (the Gypsy Association). From 1965 to 1973, Zigenarsamfundet published a magazine called *Amé Beschás—Vi bor* (We reside).

Katarina Taikon led a successful campaign in 1967 to allow Polish and Italian Romani refugees to remain in Sweden. She identified as a Social Democrat, but when the Social Democratic government stood by and did nothing in 1969 to prevent the deportation of a group of French, Italian, and Spanish Roma to an uncertain fate, she lost faith in the ability to affect change

26 Kumm, *Zigenare och vanliga svenskar.*

35. Hans Caldaras received the Katarina Taikon Award from the city of Stockholm when it was first awarded 2016. (Photo: Fred Taikon.)

through political institutions. She later described this as a turning point and the reason she started writing the autobiographically inspired children's book series *Katitzi*: "If we want to change the world, we have to start with the children."[27] This coming-of-age story about a Swedish Romani girl became an international success. In 1982, Katarina suffered a heart attack and never regained consciousness. She died in 1995.

Less well-known is the exceptional fact that Hanna Dimitri in 1965, thanks to the aid of Zigenarsamfundet and the exiled former resistance fighter Walter Pöppel, was successful in her claims against the West-German state for economic compensation for her suffering in the Nazi camps. It is noteworthy that her case was discussed in the press at the time in an affirmative discourse where the Nazi extermination policy against Roma was acknowledged.[28] It should also be noted that Katarina Taikon's 1976 book *Katitzi Z-1234* centers around the topic of Romani Holocaust survival and thereby fictionalizes the fate of Sofia Taikon.

Among Katarina Taikon's closest, most stalwart allies in the fight for civil rights were her sister Rosa Taikon and Hans Caldaras, as well as Thomas Hammarberg. Another notable name in this context is the Finnish Kale Roma

27 Tamas and Mohtadi, *Taikon*. It should be noted, however, that some of the deported Roma were later able to return and were granted residence permit in Sweden, thanks to the efforts of dedicated activists, lawyers, and journalists. P.c. Hans Caldaras and Gunilla Lundgren, August 2020.

28 Kalander, *Min mor fånge Z-4517*; Selling, "Hanna Dimitri"; Selling, "Romani resistance."

Aleka Stobin, who was a key figure in the organizations Stockholms Finska Zigenarförening (Stockholm Finnish Gypsy Association) and the Nordiska Zigenarrådet (Nordic Council of Gypsies) in the 1970s and 1980s.[29]

Recognition as a National Minority and Inclusion Policy

The next decisive step for Romani emancipation in Sweden was not taken until the end of the 1990s. This is when the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities came into force in Sweden on June 1, 2000, the political, social, and cultural rights of the Roma were officially codified. The Romani were now recognized as a national Swedish minority.[30] Norway, which had signed the framework convention the previous year, chose to recognize Roma and Resande (called Reisende, Tatere, or Romani in Norway) as two separate minorities,[31] while Sweden, as mentioned above, included Resande in the broader Roma group. According to historian Ludvig Wiklander, the Swedish approach to classifying these groups was decided entirely by state inquiry officers, as Resande had basically no organizations to advocate for them. The only Resande who managed to make his voice heard in the public debate was the head of the *Föreningen Resandefolket* (Association of Resande), Birger Rosengren. He had advocated for something akin to the Norwegian model, but according to Wiklander, he ultimately accepted the inclusion of Resande in the Romani collective in order to avoid the risk of being excluded from minority rights.[32] Another distinction between the Norwegian and Swedish approach was that at least in its official language, Sweden discontinued the use of the majority society's terms "Tattare" and "Zigenare" (equivalent to "Tinker" and "Gypsy"), while Norwegian authorities and minority representatives continued to use the majority society terms Tater and Sigøynere.[33] Another important result of minority recognition was that the Resande were able to step out of the shadows after having been denied their very existence and subjected to discrimination since 1945. As an eth-

29 Nordström, "Från socialpolitiska flyktingar."

30 Sveriges Riksdag, "Regeringens proposition 1998/99:143"; Utrikesdepartementet, "Sveriges internationella överenskommelser."

31 Stortinget, "Proposisjon nr 80."

32 Wiklander, "Resandefolket och svensk minoritetspolitik." Cf. SOU 1997:192. and SOU 1997:193.

33 However, there is currently a notable shift in attitude in relation to the meaning of these terms also in Norway, and a transition to the terms *Rom* [Roma] and *Reisende/Romani* [Norwegian Travellers]. Possibly, the in-group use of Tater for some may also be interpreted as a reclaiming of the word. Minken, "Romanifolk."

nic minority, the Resande are clearly overrepresented in the number of forced sterilizations and forced removal of children between 1945 and 1975. Many Resande have testified that they have been hiding their ethnic identity for fear of stigmatization and reprisals from authorities.[34]

Another result of national minority recognition was that the majority society was forced to examine its own history of antigypsyism. In April 2000, the Swedish government issued an official apology to the Resande.[35] This was precipitated by protests from the Secretary of the Association of the Resande, Social Democratic Party member Jan Ottosson, after neither Resande nor other Roma were invited to attend the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in January of the same year.[36] The protest gained traction largely due to media coverage that detailed the historical abuses against Resande.[37] In June of 2000, the Church of Sweden officially acknowledged its historical responsibility for the exclusion of Roma, but stopped short of issuing a formal apology. The church's statement can be seen both in the light of the Pope's public apology to the Roma and other groups at the turn of the millennium, but also the initiation of the Church of Sweden's own reconciliation process with the Sami.[38]

In 2014, the "White paper on abuses and rights violations against Roma in the twentieth century" was published, and the Swedish Commission Against Antigypsyism was introduced, which completed its work with the 2016 report "Concerned efforts against antigypsyism."[39] Although these measures may be criticized for not going far enough, the term antigypsyism had now become part of the vocabulary used in the political arena and government agencies were directed to change course. In the fight against antigypsyism, special assignments in the areas of education and information were handed down to the Living History Forum, the Swedish National Agency for Education, and the Swedish Media Council; in the area of discrimination, to the Equality Ombudsman (DO); and for hate crimes, to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention and the Swedish Police Authority.[40]

34 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; Hazell, *Resandefolket*; Lindholm, *Vägarnas folk*.
35 Hjelm Wallén and Engqvist, "Vi ber om ursäkt."
36 Hygstedt, "'Tattare' kräver ursäkt."
37 See, e.g., Kanger, "De kallar oss tattare."
38 Hammar, "Lättare packning—men hur?"; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*; cf. Nordbäck, "En försoningens väg."
39 Regeringskansliet, *Den mörka och okända historien*; SOU 2016:44.
40 Regeringskansliet, "Sveriges fjärde rapport."

A Look Ahead

Though progress has undoubtedly been made in a number of areas, there is still a long way to go before Roma reach the level of equal opportunities with other Swedes. Opportunities for Roma are still limited in Sweden through direct discrimination, but also through structural antigypsyism, the mechanisms that prevent Roma from fully enjoying their rights as citizens and as a national minority. These constructs are lasting, long-term effects of antigypsy policies. They continue to have an impact even though government agencies have long since abandoned a policy of open antigypsyism.[41] Romani organizations in Sweden are still relatively weak and are not fully equipped to address the pervasive effects of antigypsyism.

The most important step thus far is that the historical emphasis on assimilation has been replaced by new perspectives with a focus on inclusion, even though this ideal is often far from being realized. This is indicated not only by policy documents, but also by the emergence of cultural discourses on Roma, which focus more on commonalities than on otherness.[42] In some cases, being recognized as a national minority may have accelerated change at the local level.[43]

Another important aspect is the creation of a policy area that focuses on the revitalization of suppressed cultural identities and languages, including through mother tongue teaching.[44] A fact related to this is that the body of literature published in Sweden on different varieties of Romani Chib is slowly but surely growing. Further, an increasing number of Romani activists, who in turn represent wider groups, have enjoyed higher education and been consulted in political and administrative processes. New Roma voices had entered the public debate. Perhaps the most prominent of these is Soraya Post, who was elected to the European Parliament in 2014 as a representative of the Feminist Initiative party.

41 SOU 2010:55; Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.

42 For example, the 2013 exhibition by Museum of Gothenburg, "Rom San—Are You Roma?" Minoritet.se, "Utställningen vi är romer", https://www.minoritet.se/3063; Köljing, *Vi* är *romer*.

43 For example by the establishment of the Roma Information and Knowledge Centre by the municipality of Malmö, https://malmo.se/Romskt-informations--och-kunskapscenter/English.html. For an overview of Swedish Roma civil society initiatives with public funding, see Rodell Olgaç, *Kulturell och språklig revitalisering*.

44 SOU 2017:91.

There is also reason to believe that the struggle for Romani inclusion in higher education will ultimately lead to increased social mobility opportunities among the Romani people. The long march through the Swedish institutions has only just begun.

Excursus: Rosa Taikon—Romani Silversmithing and Activism

In the history of the Romani civil rights struggle in Sweden, Rosa Taikon has long been regarded as a figure working in the background of her sister, Katarina. However, in addition to her civil rights efforts, Rosa made a name for herself early in life with her art jewelry and silversmithing skills, and in 1969, her unique work was presented at a solo exhibition at the national museum.[45] The sisters came to be indefatigable allies in the political struggle for civil rights. Katarina used literature as a weapon; for Rosa, it was her silver jewelry. For her political activism and life's work as an artist, Södertörn University awarded Rosa an honorary doctorate in 2014. Just the previous year, she had been awarded the Olof Palme Prize for her lifelong struggle for human rights.

The sisters grew up in an era when Swedish Roma were still denied access to all civil rights, housing, and schooling. Rosa Taikon's account of how they became activists is telling. In the early 1960s, they both found themselves on the cusp of taking important steps in their life's journey. Katarina had taken over responsibilities for running an ice cream parlor on Birger Jarlsgatan in Stockholm, and against all odds, Rosa had been admitted to Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design. Rosa wanted to carry on the Romani silversmithing tradition from her father, who had learned the craft in Samarkand as an apprentice in the 1890s.

With the name Taikon, it was impossible to rent an apartment. Due to the sisters' activity in theater, they became acquainted with the actor Per Oscarsson, who offered them a place to live in his home. But for the sisters, the idea that it was only they who had a proper roof over their heads, not other Roma, left them with a nagging, uneasy feeling. When exploring

45 Taikon and Janusch, *Zigensk smycketradition*.

Per Oscarsson's library one day, Katarina came across a copy of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. This inspired her to write a book on Romani rights.

Her activism picked up speed from there. In addition to John Takman and Evert Kumm, she found support in socially engaged cultural workers and a few politicians, such as Ola Ullsten and Sven Andersson. In the mid-1960s, activism was centered around the organization Zigenarsamfundet (Gypsy Association) and the magazine *Amé Beschás—Vi bor* [We reside]. As Rosa would later recall, they practically lived in the parliament: through tireless lobbying, demonstrations, and petitions, they were like the constant dropping that wears away the stone. And Rosa continued to champion this cause until her death in 2017.

In 2010, Rosa Taikon was awarded the honorary medal, Illis quorum, by the center-right government of Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt. But the medal was not awarded for her political work, it was for her "significant artistic contributions, which combine innovative jewelry design with Romani smithing traditions."[46] As a political figure, she used the respect she earned to champion the cause, and soon after the medal ceremony, she berated the government's Migration Minister Tobias Billström, who had defended the illegal expulsion of Roma performing informal street work. In a much talked about debate article, Taikon wrote: "a wave of hatred against Roma and Travellers is once again sweeping across Europe, a cold wind that has now reached Sweden as well."[47] In the article, she also criticized the Delegation for Roma Affairs, which had settled for the modest goal that Roma born in 2010 would not face discrimination as adults.

Taikon's criticism of Billström was justified given his antigypsy rhetoric and his push for restrictions on Romani freedom of movement on the European level as well.[48] However, her criticism of the delegation might seem a bit unwarranted, as they clearly worked to advance the cause of

46 Kulturdepartementet, "Rosa Taikon."
47 Taikon, "Tobias Billströms inställning".
48 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 176–180.

Roma. But it does seem unreasonable to accept structural antigypsyism and discrimination against Romani for another twenty years, as Rosa argued.

During her honorary doctoral lecture at Södertörn University in 2014, Rosa spoke about the progress made since the 1960s, but she repeatedly emphasized that this progress was only possible through unyielding struggle: "Nothing will happen if we sit at home and complain around the breakfast table. We need to look these guys in the eyes and give voice to our demands."[49] And that is exactly what she did earlier the same year when the White Paper was officially released and she confronted National Police Chief Bengt Svensson about the Skåne police's illegal Roma Register database.
During the lecture, she also warned against a new wave of racism and in particular, the rise of the Sweden Democrats:

> We have racists as the third largest party: The Sweden Democrats, who go out with iron pipes and call the women whores. And dressed in Nazi uniforms. Are these the kind of politicians we want? Then I ask myself, at 90 years old: Are we back in the 40s, when they would chase down Jews and Roma into the gas chambers? Because these racists, who are now sitting in the parliament, have the power to veto if they do not like what is going on with Roma and immigrants.[50]

In her speeches and writing, Rosa repeatedly pointed out the parallels between history and the present day. Much like her sister, she saw the devastating consequences that subtle antigypsyism can have when it is internalized and causes Roma to deny their very identity. In 1960s Sweden, it was not only impossible for Roma to rent a place to live, but it was also very difficult to get a job. Rosa talked about how her cousin, who worked at Saint Göran Hospital, would answer when asked why he was dark that he was adopted. That was a long time ago. The tent camps had

49 Taikon, *Lecture at Södertörn*.

50 Taikon, *Lecture at Södertörn*. Taikon was referring to two high-profile incidents involving the Sweden Democrats: the so-called iron pipe scandal in 2012 ("SD-toppens attack," *Expressen*), and incidents in 1996 and 2014 when SD-politicians posed with Nazi symbols (Schön, "Hakkorset").

been abandoned and Roma were attending Sweden's schools, but a series of inquiries and reports from the Equality Ombudsman confirm Rosa's view that Roma could still improve their chances when seeking housing or work by concealing their ethnic identity.

This is a familiar story for Roma, Sinti and Travellers in many countries and was an issue Rosa raised when she participated in the 2012 European action of the Romani Elders in Berlin in support of the memorial to the Roma victims of the Nazis:[51] "We should have the right to be who we are. And we should not be afraid to say that we are Roma. We need to be proud of that. Because if we do not know where we come from, we cannot know where we are going."[52]

36. Rosa Taikon speaking with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in connection with her being awarded the Olof Palme Prize in 2013. (Photo: Fred Taikon.)

51 The Romani Elders is a group that was formed in 2011 at the invitation of the European Roma Cultural Foundation in Budapest and consisted of Ágnes Daróczi (Hungarian intellectual), Ceija Stojka (Austrian musician, artist, and author), Romani activist Nicolae Gheorghe (Romanian philosopher, sociologist, and human rights activist), Hans Caldaras, Romani Rose (Chair of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma), Rosa Taikon and Sandra Jayat (French author and artist). The cause of the initiative was the repeated postponement of the completion of the memorial to the Nazi genocide of Sinti and Romani, a memorial that had already been approved. It was finally inaugurated on October 24, 2012. See above: "Excursus: Memorial to the Nazi genocide of European Romani and Sinti". The Romani Elders also took the initiative to recognize August 2 as Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day, which was approved by the European Parliament in 2015. The group's position was that remembrance and the current fight against antigypsyism are two sides of the same coin. After Gheorghe and Stojka passed away in 2013, the Romani Elders have no longer been active as a group. Bársony and Daróczi "Forbidden People," 10–11; "Civil Initiative," *Berlin 7th Biennale.*

52 Taikon, "Video message".

Chapter 6

Momentum for Romani Rights in Sweden, 2010–2016

White Papers, Police Registries, and the Begging Debate

I understand that it's not easy when you get a police registry thrown in your face.
Soraya Post, addressing the White Paper release ceremony, March 25, 2014.

During the final stages of the White Paper production, which was thought as a reparation of trust by means of a historical scrutiny of twentieth century antigypsyism, the playing field abruptly changed by a sensational revelation on September 23, 2013: no fewer than 4,741 Roma, including the deceased and children, were registered and their genealogies analyzed, simply because they were Roma.[1] This is the latest episode in a long tradition of registering Roma, including the Resande group.[2]

This practice was long ago officially abandoned and forbidden under law. The question remains why Swedish police, even as recently as 2013, considered it appropriate and permissible. My hypothesis is that the practice was never fully condemned or even questioned among police, not only in Sweden, but also within Interpol and its predecessor, the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), which actively registered Romani people since the 1930s.[3] This hypothesis was confirmed in June 2021 by a quote of section chief at the unit at the police for south Sweden, Patrik Andersson, who in an article was quoted saying that the banning of police registering deprived the police of an, in his eyes, important tool for surveillance.[4]

1 "Över tusen barn," *Dagens Nyheter*.
2 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.
3 Selling, "The Obscured Story"; Huonker, *Unabhängige Expertenkommission Schweiz*.
4 Strindlöv, "De jobbar med inkludering"; Cf. Lauritzen and Selling, "Expressens rapportering."

The discriminatory nature of the police register was established after a long process of separate legal reviews: all the individuals concerned were offered compensation, and the minister of justice, as well as the national Chief of Police, Dan Eliasson, apologized.[5] Nevertheless, the police and their oversight bodies far too long denied the extent of ethnic discrimination, insisting that mistakes were the result of improper police procedure rather than discriminatory intent.

Judicial blindness to discrimination against Romani follows several historical examples of police misconduct, including the eviction of Romani from Ludvika in 1956,[6] and the deportation of Romani streetworkers from Stockholm in 2010.[7] In this chapter, I propose that the acknowledgement of antigypsyism as a specific form of racism has helped deconstruct the myth of color blind and ethnically neutral policing as it concerns Roma. In the case of Sweden, achieving this goal has been the work of both Romani and non-Romani activists working side by side to promote anti-racist standpoints. This activism has been supported by a range of national and international parliamentary initiatives, from the 1953 parliamentary motion on "racial discrimination of Gypsies," to the EU parliament's resolution in 2015 on antigypsyism in Europe.[8]

The Swedish Example

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has repeatedly highlighted Sweden, as well as Norway as good practice examples of how contemporary antigypsyism can be combatted with parliamentary commissions tasked to investigate dark chapters of national history.[9] Considering the example of the Swedish public information campaign about the Holocaust,[10] as well as the historical prominence of Scandinavian diplo-

5 Stockholms Tingsrätt. "Staten får betala"; "Dan Eliasson," *Dagens Nyheter*; "Rikspolischefen idag," Sveriges Radio Romano.

6 Following the warrantless eviction of Roma from a campground in Ludvika in 1956, police commanders were found culpable in the Svea Court of Appeal, but requests for punitive measures on the grounds of racial discrimination were rejected. In 2010, the police were criticized by the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the warrantless eviction of Roma from Stockholm, but again, in this instance, ethnic discrimination was not considered the motivating factor. See Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 102–127.

7 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*.

8 Sveriges Riksdag "Motion i andra kammaren 1953"; European Parliament, "Resolution Roma Day."

9 See: ODIHR, "Sweden's Good Practices"; Selling, "Summary Report."

10 The campaign first called '*Levande historia,*' (Living history) was the predecessor to the agency Forum for Living History and included the dissemination of the book by Bruchfeld and Levine, *Tell ye Your Children*.

mats, this might just be claimed as yet another example of the moral superiority of Scandinavia, what from the outside seems like a complacent "Scandinavian exceptionalism."[11] My objective here, however, is not to compare policies implemented in Scandinavia with those implemented elsewhere. I would instead like to consider how apt this recognition and praise is to the actual developments of recent years. I will focus on the Roma policy context in Sweden, distinguishing it from that of Norway. The main objective of this chapter is to critically discuss a Swedish "momentum for Romani rights" and the establishment of the concept of antigypsyism between 2010 and 2016. How did this momentum evolve? How was it used? What were the consequences of the path chosen?

Over the last century, policies in Sweden towards Resande and other Roma show several clear paradigm shifts. At the start of the twentieth century, "tattare" and "zigenare" were considered vagrants. As racial biology gained influence, separate policies were developed for "tattare" and "zigenare." This explicit policy shift is visible in the 1923 report of the Poverty relief committee, which stipulated that "zigenare" would be forced to leave the country, while "tattare" would be forcibly assimilated or sterilized.[12] The prohibition against "zigenare" immigration, which had been established in 1914, would continue to apply, which represents a form of statutory discrimination against a particular ethnic group that is historically unique in twentieth-century Sweden.

Swedish policies then made a marked shift in the 1950s in connection with the discrediting of racial biology theories. Swedish Roma, "zigenare" in the terminology of the time, were now to be assimilated as part of the burgeoning social welfare state, and the immigration prohibition was ruled illegal. The new politics of assimilation did not, however, encompass the Resande group: the "tattare" issue had suddenly disappeared. Cultural rights were also glossed over. Assimilation, in the social-democratic version, was a question of housing, employment, healthcare, and education.

This paradigm shift at the turn of the millennium leads to the heart of this chapter and must be considered from an international perspective. Sweden's recognition of Roma, Sami, Tornedalians, Jews, and Swedish Finns was part of an ongoing European process regarding the recognition of minority rights and the transnational discourse around historic responsibility for the Holocaust.[13] Sweden assumed a prominent role in the latter discourse, with its hosting of

11 See: University of Oslo "Nordic Branding."

12 SOU 1923:2.

13 Cf. Council of Europe. *Framework Convention*; Selling, "Between History and Politics."

the Stockholm International Forum of the Holocaust.[14] Romani people had long been neglected in these discussions, but the idea of historical responsibility was established. A further factor is the increasing acceptance of the Romani minority as part of political processes following this recognition. This also includes the Resande group who now began to publicly organize themselves. In 2000, the Church of Sweden accepted responsibility for the first time for historical injustices committed against Roma, and the Swedish government issued an apology the same year to Resande people. However, research into the history of Swedish antigypsyism was still lacking,[15] and apologies were vague and without consequence.

To resolve these issues, and especially to resolve questions regarding Romani social subordination, the Delegation for Romani Issues was appointed in 2006. Participants included Romani representatives and other experts. The delegation presented its official report in 2010. With its thorough investigation of Romani history and present social situation, the delegation paved the way for a new Romani policy, indicated by the report's title, "Roma rights: a strategy for Roma in Sweden."[16] The report focused on social justice, the empowerment of Roma, and the creation of trust. First, the delegation called for a national strategy for Romani inclusion in line with principles established by the EU.[17] In parallel with the inclusion strategy, it was proposed that Sweden participate in *Dosta!*, a Council of Europe campaign against antigypsyism.[18] Second, the delegation proposed a "truth commission to investigate the historic injustices against Romani."[19] Such a commission would also investigate the terms of collective material compensation and an official apology. The report highlighted the case of Norway, where a similar process ended with state-funded research, an official apology from the state and compensation in

14 In 1998, Prime Minister Göran Persson initiated the creation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), with the objective of encouraging Holocaust remembrance among member states. Selling, "Between History and Politics".

15 The first report on the issue in 2004 by the Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, "Diskriminering av romer," referred primarily to the dissertations of racial biologist Allan Etzler, "Zigenarna" (1944) and of social scientist Norma Montesino, "Zigenarfrågan" (2002). From diametrically opposed perspectives, these offered empirical knowledge. But the Equality Ombudsman failed to refer to any Swedish scholarly research that adopted the term "antigypsyism" or alternative terms for this phenomenon.

16 SOU 2010:55.

17 *Vademecum*, "Principles for Roma Inclusion."

18 The effort aimed to diminish prejudice and counteract antigypsyism with public information campaigns and local projects. Emphasis was placed on countries in southern Europe, but the campaign has also received funding from the Finnish government. https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/dosta-campaign.

19 SOU 2010:55, 23.

the form of a state-funded museum and cultural center, Latjo Drom as part of the Glomdalsmuseet, as well as a foundation to further the interests of Tater/Romani.[20] As I demonstrate below, the delegation's suggestion to follow the example of Norway was not heeded.

Momentum Evolves

The center-right government chose a less radical route than the one suggested by the Delegation for Romani Issues. Admittedly, a groundwork for a strategy of Romani inclusion was laid out, but the suggestion for a campaign against antigypsyism was rejected. Rather than forcefully confronting past injustices, the government chose to commission the documentation of witness statements regarding state-sponsored abuses against Roma during the twentieth century. As described above, this choice prompted criticism from both Romani activists and scholars. The time period covered was considered too narrow, permitting the conclusion that antigypsyism was already a thing of the past, the investigation lacked independence from the government, and those who perpetrated and implemented antigypsy policies would not be held accountable. This model seemed to evade historical responsibility. Nevertheless, the issue gradually worked its way into public debate. Reports in the mass media included documents and testimonies regarding "the dark and unknown history." Scholars began to open their eyes to the importance of this history, and an international conference on antigypsyism was organized in Uppsala.[21]

But the real game changer was the revelation in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* on September 23, 2013 about the police register of Roma.[22] Because the White Paper was in the process of being finalized and limited itself to consideration of antigypsyism prior to 2000, its credibility was called into question. The police were now put under the media spotlight. Initially, the police completely denied the existence of the register.[23] As *Dagens Nyheter* presented more evidence, the police admitted its existence, but denied that the registration was based solely on Roma ethnicity. October 27, the Chief Legal Officer of the Police said on national television: "That is a thought construction cre-

20 SOU 2010:55, 525.
21 Selling et al., eds., *Antiziganism*.
22 "Över tusen barn," *Dagens Nyheter*, September 23, 2013.
23 "Skånepolisen", *Svenska Dagbladet*.

ated by *Dagens Nyheter*."[24] After also this defense was disproven, the police attempted to exonerate themselves by claiming that the registry was standard procedure for combatting criminality. The revelation had the effect of creating momentum: the media took the side of the Roma, both historically and as concerned present-day debates regarding vulnerable EU-migrants, often stereotypically identified as Roma. "Roma" were suddenly a hot topic in newsrooms.[25]

The White Paper's credibility was increasingly questioned, and demands for a truth commission were bolstered, not least because the National Police Board was among the consultation bodies responsible for declining the suggestion made by the Delegation for Romani issues. The National Police Board declined scrutiny by a truth commission, claiming that such scrutiny would lead to "a one-sided focus on past injustices, and would furthermore be retrospective rather than forward-looking."[26] Now, the government chose a different solution. Less than a week before the ceremonial release of the White Paper, the government decided, without any prior public discussion, that a commission against antigypsyism would be appointed.[27] The Council of Europe's former Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, was designated to lead the commission, and Roma would make up a majority of committee members.[28] The commission was limited by the short, two-year term of its assignment and a lack of resources to produce research.

The government's sudden about-face, prior to the release of the White Paper, regarding the commission against antigypsyism, indicates an attempt to reestablish credibility on this issue while placating critics. During the ceremonial release of the White Paper on March 25, 2014, Soraya Post was one of many invited witnesses who described how antigypsyism had affected her as a Romani person. She began her address by putting into words the lack of trust many Romani in Sweden felt, even in relation to the White Paper: "Everyone is saying thank you for this White Paper. I have to start by saying, I can't say thank you yet. I haven't seen what the results will be."[29] Post also questioned whether all parts of the government truly endorsed a policy that secured Romani rights. She even addressed the elephant in the room, the failure of police to accept

24 Gustafsson, "Polisen."
25 Quantitative analysis based on searches in the media database Retriever.se.
26 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 173. The argument has striking similarities with the aforementioned GLS refusal of historical responsibility at the 2012 conference.
27 Regeringskansliet, "Kommittédirektiv," Dir. 2014:47.
28 Website of the Commission archived at: http://www.minoritet.se/user/motantiziganism/.
29 Post, "Comments."

responsibility for the discriminatory registries of Roma, with a sympathetic but critical nod to the White Paper's editors: "I understand that it's not easy when you get a police registry thrown in your face."[30] Soraya Post also criticized the overheated debate regarding begging bans and how begging people were driven from their campgrounds without being offered alternatives. She saw this as a repetition of the historical missteps described in the White Paper and therefore indicative of an inability to learn from the past.

The government strategy partly succeeded since the need for a truth commission was more rarely discussed. But, on the other hand, the fact that the government made the year 2000 the cut off for the White Paper proved a mistake. The police scandal prompted more discussion than the White Paper and remained an open sore for more than a year, until the Parliamentary Ombudsman's declaration in 2015 that the registry was not only illegal but constituted ethnic discrimination. In connection with this, National Police Chief Dan Eliasson issued an apology to Roma via both a message to the commission against antigypsyism and an interview with *Dagens Nyheter*.[31] This was remarkable in two respects: for the first time, the judiciary condemned police procedure for being prejudicial towards Romani, and for the first time, a Swedish chief of police apologized to Roma. Then, in 2016, the Stockholm District Court found that individuals appearing in the registry were entitled to economic compensation.[32] In an interview, Eliasson commented on the continuity of antigypsyism as follows:

> Many of us who live in Sweden grew up in an environment where Roma were portrayed in a certain way. We have baggage that certainly might have an influence, within the police, without our being aware. I can't rule out the possibility that this was a factor here. But that there was a willful intention to discriminate, I have a hard time believing that.[33]

This can be seen as an admission of the continual influence of structural antigypsyism on police behavior. At the same time, it was a sign of the White Paper's failure to reveal the key role played by police in persecution of Roma, rather than their passive reflection of societal prejudice.[34]

30 Post, "Comments."
31 "Dan Eliasson," *Dagens Nyheter*, May 8, 2015.
32 Stockholms tingsrätt, "Staten får betala."
33 "Dan Eliasson," *Dagens Nyheter*.
34 Selling, "The Obscured Story."

The Hammarberg Commission played an active role in demanding police responsibility as well as establishing the concept of antigypsyism. In their final report, the commission also criticized the antigypsy undertones of the begging debate.[35] Once again, the report called for an official apology as well as material compensation as proposed in 2010 by the Delegation for Romani Issues. However, hindsight points to the conclusion that momentum had already passed by the time the final report of the Commission Against Antigypsyism was published.

Influence of the Begging Debate

At the previously mentioned meeting of the ODIHR in 2016, many attendees expressed fears that momentum for Romani rights on the European level was being lost. Three possible causes were mentioned: 1) the growing influence of right-wing populist movements; 2) the shift in media interest from Romani issues to, for example, the so-called refugee crisis; 3) crisis among EU institutions in 2016.

To counteract these effects, the formation of alliances between political entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was suggested in the work to implement the EU parliamentary resolution of 2015 regarding antigypsyism and the commemoration of the Romani victims of the Holocaust. Emphasis would also be placed on efforts to build on existing good examples.[36]

In the case of Sweden, the first two possible causes for lost momentum can be confirmed with statistics. Search results for the word "Roma" (search term: *rom**) in the media database Retriever clearly peak between 2013–2015, with a fivefold increase following the revelation of the police registry in September 2013. By 2016, the subject "Roma" declined to the same low levels prior to 2013. Another observation is the strong correlation during peak media coverage of the terms "Roma" and "begging." In 2015, over one-third of articles about Roma included mention of begging, compared to one-tenth of articles prior to 2014. This difference is considerable, seeing as the number of articles discussing the so-called "begging ban" increased steadily during this period.[37] At the same time, the Sweden Democrats, a xenophobic and nationalist party, doubled their support among voters between July 2014 and July 2015. While support of Sweden Democrats stabilized around 20 percent in opinion polls,

35 SOU 2016:44.

36 Selling, "Summary Report."

37 Analysis based on searches in the media database Retriever.se.

the parties in government—the Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the Left Party—fell in the polls from 50% to 38%.[38] The rise of Sweden Democrats coincided with the party's poster campaign against "organized begging," which was accompanied on the web by openly antigypsy statements. For example, Tommy Hansson, former editor-in-chief of the Sweden Democrats party organ, *SD-kuriren,* spoke of "criminal leagues of gypsies defiling our inner cities." On other far-right websites, the historically racist epithet "Gypsy plague" was revived in connection with the anti-begging campaign.[39]

One would be mistaken in considering the antigypsy begging prohibition debate an invention of far-right populists. It has not been punishable by law to beg in Sweden since 1964. Nevertheless, Minister for Migration Tobias Billström defended the 2010 expulsion of so-called "Romani beggars" and street musicians from Stockholm. "Begging is not an honest way to make a living," Billström claimed in a radio interview, adding that Roma "more than other groups chose to come here and support themselves this way."[40] It would come to light that the police had leaned heavily on outdated legislation on vagrancy, and directed their efforts exclusively at Roma. The practice was condemned by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and by the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsman. The latter did not, however, consider the case an incident of ethnic discrimination. The ombudsman thus repeated the mistakes of 1956, when the police were reprimanded for the warrantless eviction of Roma from a campground in Ludvika, but the ombudsman did not consider the incident an example of antigypsyism (racial discrimination against "Gypsies," as it was known then) despite the eviction being based on the Romani identity of the victims.[41] In addition, Minister for Migration Billström was one of six European ministers who, in 2012, worked to reinstate visa requirements for people travelling from Serbia in order to counteract Romani immigration.[42] The ministers' proposal did not include the term Roma, but their purpose was made clear with reference to another document, warning of Romani immigration from the Western Balkans.[43] Also in 2012, Billström's party, the Moderates, started a working group to hash out

38 According to aggregated opinion polls from the website www.val.digital/history.

39 Hansson, "Vi invaderas av tiggare." Cf. "Så ljuger SD om tiggarna," *Expo*, May 19, 2014; Brentlin and Israelsson, "SD ljuger"; "'Racist' advert," *Independent*, August 4, 2015,

40 Sveriges Radio, *P1-morgon*, August 2, 2010.

41 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 176–179.

42 Jusitiedepartementet and Billström et al., Letter, October 2, 2012.

43 European Commission, COM [2012] 472 final.

the details of a begging ban proposal.[44] This was not considered controversial within the Moderate Party, whose leadership either ignored or remained ignorant of the historical context.

A study by sociologist Vanessa Barker analyzed the begging debate from yet another perspective: the challenge of maintaining the Scandinavian social welfare system within the framework of the discourse that is often ironically described as "Scandinavian exceptionalism."[45] According to Barker, even right-leaning parties are obliged to accept the terms of a discourse aimed at maintaining a high standard of welfare for all, without excluding the poor. Therefore, says Barker, the begging debate resulted in "benevolent violence," that is to say, the use of force against its (non-Swedish) practitioners with forced evictions, criminalization of "organized begging," and obstacles to free movement across borders, despite formal permission to engage in begging. She also notes the nationalistic undertones in presenting the "begging problem" as a threat to the welfare state, akin to characterizing it as a threat to the core of the Swedish nation. In Norway, the historian Chalak Kaveh has shown that the situation there repeats historical patterns by scapegoating Roma.[46]

Although the "refugee crisis" of 2015 partly overshadowed the issue, the daily visible presence of people begging reinforced the age-old idea of the "anti-social Roma" that forms the heart of antigypsy ideology. As mentioned above, this was noted by the Commission Against Antigypsyism, which confirmed in its final report the clear connection between the antigypsy discourse regarding begging and the increase in hate crimes against actual Roma and imagined "Gypsies."[47]

On August 8, 2018, this discourse resulted in the brutal, sadistic, and fatal attack of Romanian non-Romani citizen Gheorghe "Gica" Hortolomei-Lupuska by two youths in Huskvarna, Sweden. Commentators on the webforum Flashback sympathized with the suspects' murder of a "parasitic gypsy." The murder was preceded by a long, intensive debate against begging. The Moderate Party increasingly argued for a begging ban. Members of the Sweden Democrats encouraged private individuals to take matters into their own hands. A politician in Vimmerby, Nils-Eric Johansson, was convicted of ethnic persecution after recommending bombing Romani camps.[48] In December

44 Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 179.
45 Barker, "Nordic Vagabonds."
46 Kaveh, "Antiziganism in Norway."
47 SOU 2016:44. See also: Wallengren and Mellgren, *Gatans tysta offer*; Wallengren and Mellgren, *Romers upplevelser av hatbrott*.
48 Ericsson, "Efter sin död."

of 2015, Sweden Democrats blogger Jan Sjunnesson wrote: "If you really want to get rid of the beggars, and you don't get any support from the government or your neighbors, then you've got to take care of it yourself. Preferably with a few likeminded individuals, but otherwise alone."[49] This context did not factor into the judicial proceedings, and Gica's death was considered mere aggravated assault and harassment. Investigators found no evidence of a hate crime.

From a social-psychological perspective, this discourse has turned Roma into potential victims and non-Roma into potential perpetrators. In a dissertation by cultural geographer Erik Hansson, he posits that meeting a beggar, within the prejudicial context of the media debate, creates ambivalent feelings that range from empathy to hatred.[50] From the Romani perspective, the heightened discourse has created fear that hatred for people who beg will spill over onto the Romani people as a whole. An empirical study by Simon Wallengren and Caroline Mellgren from 2017, before the Huskvarna attack, showed that many Roma changed their behaviors in reaction to this hatred, including by concealing their Romani identity.[51]

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Momentum in Sweden for Romani rights reached a peak between 2013 and 2015. This was the result of both the European initiative for Romani human rights and the international discourse regarding historical responsibility. Political action contributed to a policy shift, itself set in motion when the Delegation for Romani Issues adopted a rights-based perspective, in contrast with decades of inquiries focused on Roma ("Gypsies") as a problem to be solved. This included Romani political and organizational participation. The idea of digging into the past and learning from past transgressions was already established through the confrontation of Nazi atrocities and antisemitism that had gained traction at the turn of the millennium. The media, scholars, and politicians, with this as background, could apply the same concepts to the Romani experience of the majority society's persecution. The concept of antigypsyism was also established in this context within academia and politics. Society's historical and contemporary responsibility for the discrimina-

49 Sjunnesson, "Blockera tiggarna." Sjunnesson claims he only encouraged individuals to physically "block" those engaged in begging.

50 Hansson, "*Det känns fel.*"

51 Wallengren and Mellgren, *Romers upplevelser av hatbrott*.

tion against and exclusion of Roma was made clear. Demands were made for a truth commission. When news of the police scandal broke, the existence of the problem seemed confirmed, and it attracted more attention than ever. It was then that the government was forced to step up its cautious strategy of merely collecting Romani witness testimonies regarding historical antigypsyism. The Commission Against Antigypsyism was appointed.

Simultaneously, a counter-discourse with antigypsy undertones began in the political center, and in the media, which became exploited by the Sweden Democrats.[52] The begging debate came to resemble a search for scapegoats, with "beggar" functioning as a codeword for "Gypsy." While the media began losing interest in Roma in 2015 and 2016, the anti-begging discourse continued and even grew, with contributions from the political center: even the Social Democrat-led government began to discuss a possible ban on begging.[53]

In other words, the momentum for Romani rights became ambiguous as the debate grew increasingly polarized. Perhaps the principal lesson is that neither a public governmental inquiry nor a well-intentioned commission are sufficient to achieve political change. Public pressure is also necessary. This chapter also shows how unpredictable events, publicized through the media, can undermine or incite latent antigypsy sentiment.

Excursus: "A Collective Romani Voice"

The government strategy for Romani inclusion, initiated in 2012 with the intention of making Romani equal citizens by 2032, is in the process of failure, according to state inquiry officer Charlotta Wickman:

> We lack a concerted effort to counteract the clearest cause of the present Romani situation, which is antigypsy sentiment. . . . Long-range vision and consistency are lacking, which means we will not be able to reach the goal for Romani inclusion nor guarantee Roma human rights within the foreseeable future.[54]

52 Counter-discourse is a standpoint that challenges a prevailing consensus or dominating discourse. An indicator of right-wing populist counter-discourses is the calculated violation of taboos in resisting elite conceptions of political correctness that are seen as supressions of "truth." Selling, *Svensk antiziganism*, 42; Selling, *Aus den Schatten*, 46–52.

53 "Stefan Löfven," *Expressen*, June 28, 2018.

54 Wickman, *Långsiktighet och stadga*.

To avoid failure, according to the inquiry officer, would require "extraordinary and far-reaching measures." The measure suggested by the inquiry is a national center for Romani issues. The background of the inquiry is the analysis performed in 2016 by the Commission Against Antigypsyism, which in turn relied upon the results of the 2010 Delegation for Romani Issues.[55] As shown above, competent public inquiries are no guarantee of positive political results. Furthermore, everything takes time. And political processes touching upon Romani rights seem particularly sluggish.

Wickman's inquiry was completed in February 2018 but was only released in the summer of 2019 after sitting idle in the Swedish Government Offices for over a year. The delay, and the fact that the government nevertheless failed to consider the inquiry's results, was said to stem from the inconclusive results of the 2018 elections and the drawn-out process of forming a government.[56] An educated guess would be that they also stemmed from uncertainties regarding the reactions of Romani civil society. To this day of writing, the inquiry has not been answered by the government.

Whatever the results of this process, the inquiry provides an excellent overview. Perhaps it indicates a paradigm shift: distinct from previous inquiries, it did not use the established "reference group" model, including few Roma and other experts, but instead carried out large numbers of interviews, surveys and consultations. The inquiry's choice of methods is a critique of the reference group model's failure to empower Roma. At the same time, since 2012, far too little has been done to strengthen Romani civil society. This could be called the inclusion strategy's democratic deficit. The solution, according to the inquiry, would be to create a permanent body to represent Romani interests. The other principal cause of the failure of the inclusion strategy, according to the inquiry, is the failure to prioritize the fight against antigypsyism in the 2012 strategy. This, too, according to the proposal, should be changed.

55 SOU 2016:44; SOU 2010:55.

56 Ministry of Culture, email to author. 9 July 2019.

In 2010, following the Finnish example, the Delegation for Romani Issues proposed a majority Romani office tasked with monitoring of Romani policies. The government, together with Romani civil society, would appoint its members. The proposal was criticized by representatives of the Romani community as a potential tool for government purposes. The government in turn rejected the proposal as an unnecessary bureaucratization. Inclusion policies would instead be carried out by local governments and existing government agencies. After six years it is clear that this model failed to work, according to the Wickman inquiry. The Commission Against Antigypsyism proposed a national center for Romani issues, functioning as an independent government agency. The center would be governed by a Romani majority and work to raise awareness regarding Romani rights and antigypsyism, while also advising the government and the public.

Wickman's inquiry takes a similar line but proposes that such a center be called The Agency for Romani Issues (Myndighet för romska frågor) and should be granted greater authority by being subsumed within a larger government agency. The question then is which agency. One candidate, the Forum for Living History, was considered unsuitable due to its current reorganization. The other principal candidate is said to be the Equality Ombudsman, but that choice is questioned with the following curious logic: "The Equality Ombudsman has previously created trust among the Roma minority, but the shift in the agency's work, towards development of rights implementation, has impacted this relationship."[57] Neither is inclusion within the Stockholm Regional Government appropriate, which has to date organized the inclusion strategy, due to a need for national breadth. The final conclusion is that the Agency for Romani Issues will be part of a public authority that does not yet exist: The Agency of Minority Issues, with a focus on human rights.

According to the proposal, the Agency for Romani Issues would be directed by a board of seven individuals. It is not specified that a majority will be Roma, but they must have "Romani linguistic and cultural

57 Wickman, *Långsiktighet och stadga*, 93.

expertise." It should also be taken into consideration that "the Romani minority consists of diverse groups."[58] These perhaps four key individuals would be selected via nomination from among civil society, but the government's approval is required for appointment within the agency.

Wickman goes back and forth in terms of the problem of representation. The goal is to ensure Romani input in a long-term, stable institution that has the mandate, and the means, to truly make a difference for Romani rights and in the fight against antigypsyism. A public authority is truly a forceful instrument. But what constitutes Romani influence? The Finnish model mentioned in SOU 2010:55 was a tool of the government, from assimilation to inclusion. This led to sharp criticism in the 1960s from Romani activists in Finland. And now Wickman's inquiry levels the critique that even the practice of reference groups and consultations risks solidifying the Romani power deficit. Wickman states that many Roma long for a collective voice. That is why the inquiry makes such an unprecedented proposal: that the agency should organize a national, bi-annual, two-day meeting for the Romani civil society, where one day should be dedicated to defining a collective Romani standpoint and the other to a dialogue with representatives of the majority society.

An educated guess is that this will not happen. That makes it interesting to consider what Wickman's inquiry did not propose. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the agency would "gather and circulate knowledge regarding antigypsyism . . . grounded in research or experience."[59] Nevertheless, absent are proposals regarding directed research funding, as suggested by Södertörn University in its referral comments provided to the Commission Against Antigypsyism, where the university pointed to examples from both the Swedish Center for Sami Research at Umeå University and the newly established center for antigypsyism research at the University of Heidelberg, Germany.[60]

58 Wickman, *Långsiktighet och stadga*, 84–86.
59 Wickman, *Långsiktighet och stadga*, 120.
60 Södertörn University, "Yttrande."

The German example is of particular interest, since that research center was created by the government, following the initiative of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. In earlier chapters, the Central Council has been discussed as a driver of Romani liberation. Within Great Britain and France, as at times in Sweden and Finland, Romani organizations have also been responsible for driving political change. It is therefore ignorant and portentous that the inquiry into the Roma national center uses the following wording to blame the Roma for their currently weak political organization:

> This form of self-organization, which is common among other parts of society, is not common among Roma. The minority instead organizes itself according to extended families or other similar arrangements. Nowadays, examples of the forms of organization seen in society at large are increasingly prevalent.

This assertion disregards both history and international experience and is used to support the conclusion that the time is not yet ripe for an independent national association of Roma. Furthermore, the passage's generalizations about Roma, as a traditional and undeveloped collective group, are unflattering and prejudiced. The inquiry therefore walks a fine line between outmoded perspectives and a power-critical analysis that opens the door for the exercise of real authority. That the inquiry speaks encouragingly of skill and leadership development for Roma and knowledge exchange among Romani and non-Romani associations points the way towards that open door. Perhaps, if Wickman's proposal against all odds becomes realized, it will be the big, bi-annual meeting of the future Agency of Romani Issues that finally takes the decisive step towards creating a collective voice outside the bounds of governmental agencies.

Chapter 7

Final Reflection

A few years ago, I was asked to participate in the production of a school film about the history of the Romani people.[1] Since the project took a serious look at Romani history and the schools were in desperate need of this kind of material, I gladly said yes. The documentary-style film covered the long history of the Roma and included interviews with Romani activists from Sweden such as Fred Taikon, Hans Caldaras, Bennie Åkerfeldt and Soraya Post. When I had the chance to watch the finalized film with Romani students, I could see that it made an impression. But it was not uplifting. Was it an overly one-sided, negative depiction of history? Was it a reasonable depiction of historical events in Sweden and Western Europe, which is a story dominated by the negative experiences of Resande and other Roma in their encounters with the majority society? The film did convey information that Romani craftsmanship was appreciated and that Roma for example, were respected as skilled soldiers by none other than Charles XII of Sweden. But the film is not upbeat: it tells the story of a dark past that casts a shadow to this day.

Perhaps we need to highlight some aspects of this history that are more hopeful. The many small victories of individual Romani as they fought to create the best life possible. The major leaps forward that led to actual improvements for the group as a whole. The long list of Romani role models, only a few of whom have received the attention they deserve.

Roma are not a homogeneous group. This cannot be emphasized enough. The strategic unification around symbols, such as the Romani flag, the anthem "Djelem Djelem" and international commemoration days have certainly

1 Persson, *Romernas historia*.

helped strengthen the voice of the Romani people. But at the same time, these symbols may have reinforced misconceptions and generalizations in the majority society, giving the impression that Roma are more homogeneous than they actually are.

Romani students have often reminded me that the depiction of the history of the Romani minority in Sweden is dominated by the sub-group called Swedish Roma. That is certainly true, and it is a consequence of history. It is true of the antigypsy policies of the twentieth century and of the Romani civil rights struggle, which had a prominent figure at the helm in Sweden in Katarina Taikon.

At the same time, this story is a bit skewed, as there have long been whispers about the oldest and perhaps largest Romani group in Sweden, the Resande. When the open persecution of "Tattare" was no longer pursued after World War Two, the Resande faded into the background. In the end, the notion emerged that the group did not even exist. It was only through the recognition as a national minority in 2000 that Resande activists succeeded in having their voices heard. The Finnish Roma of Sweden have played a more prominent role in the debate, both because of the visibility of their traditional women's clothing as a marker of ethnic identity, but also through strong activists, such as Aleka Stobin, Miranda Vuolasranta, and Diana Nyman. The so-called Non-Nordic Romani and "newly arrived Roma" in Sweden have received far too little attention. This may be due to an overly one-sided focus on the Swedish history of the Romani minority, which, among other misconceptions, has led to the false notion that all Roma are Christians. "Non-Nordic" and "newly arrived" Roma carry memories from other European countries: experiences of brutal persecution stretching far back in history, but also a long history of civil and social rights that were afforded to them in a number of societies, as well as a rich repertoire of traditions that are different than those of Swedish Roma and Resande. Roma in Sweden are multicultural.

Swedish media coverage of Roma in recent years has increasingly come to be dominated by discussions about begging, while the history of Romani slavery is almost unknown, as are the other causes of the extreme poverty and racism that plague many Roma in Romania. The view of begging has thus become something of a moral issue. In a long historical perspective, it is enlightening to take a closer look at the contrast between the experiences of early Romani emancipation in Eastern Europe, for example, Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire and Yugoslavia, and the experiences in Western Europe, namely, the persecution Romani people have endured at the hands of the state and church

in Northern and Western Europe since the Middle Ages. Knowledge of the past can help us make better sense of the present.

Antigypsyism is the biggest remaining hurdle to overcome on the path to Romani liberation. It manifests as open discrimination, prejudice, and racism, mainly directed at Roma who can be identified as Roma, or individuals that the antigypsyist perceives as "Gypsy." Ian Hancock contends that the Romani people's long history as Europe's most "visible minority" has made them particularly vulnerable.[2] In today's multicultural Sweden, it is not as easy to determine who is Roma and who is not. Therefore, beggars from Eastern Europe, who are perceived to be "Gypsies," and female Finnish Roma who wear clothing according to their ethnic norm, are particularly vulnerable. Certain surnames can also reveal ethnicity, as can parents who request mother tongue teaching in Romani for their children.

One manifestation of antigypsyism that we rarely get to read about in the media is the low-intensity antigypsyism that many Roma encounter every day, whether it comes from neighbors, at school, at work, or in a shopping center. It can be very subtle, difficult to put your finger on, and it therefore rarely results in reports of discrimination. And it is easy for the perpetrator to simply deny it. It is a double-edged sword, because it both excludes the victim and is internalized. This internalization has been described in documentary and fictional works by Katarina Taikon: the child Katitzi, whose self-image is shaken when she is branded a "Gypsy" some 30 pages into the first book, and the child Katarina, who is perpetually exhausted from always having to be more honest, cleaner, and more proper than other children to protect the reputation of her family. During the White Paper ceremony on March 25, 2014, Resande activist Eleanor Frankemo testified to the same experience.[3]

Another phenomenon that indirectly reinforces antigypsyism is media coverage, which often only mentions Roma in negative contexts. A journalist may have good intentions by covering a story that highlights discrimination, but the overall effect is that Romani ethnicity itself is seen as a problem. This kind of thinking leads people like antigypsy ethnologist and writer Karl-Olov Arnstberg to the harmful conclusion that one can only "regret the unfortunate fate that causes some people to be born Gypsies."[4] It is therefore essential that positive examples are also highlighted in the media, but also the

2 Hancock, "Comment on Rainer Schulze," 77.
3 Riksarkivet, "Ceremoni—Vitbok."
4 Arnstberg, *Zigenare och svenskar*, 416.

mundane: Roma are people with the same needs as other people and the same desire to fulfil their personal dreams. This perspective has been more widely disseminated in recent years, both in the media and in cultural projects, such as the prize-winning Museum of Gothenburg's exhibition *Rom san—vi är romer* (Rom san—we are Roma).[5]

Within historical science, this subtle antigypsyism can be equated to victimization: the image of Roma as perpetual losers throughout history, which extinguishes all hope and implies that Roma somehow have only themselves to blame. But it is very easy to raise objections to this thesis; it was not that long ago that an informed public acknowledged historical antigypsyism, Roma enslavement, and the Nazi genocide of Roma. Conflicts over acknowledgement and memory of this past, as well as historical justice, have proved politically productive in a number of European countries, forcing the public to recognize the historical responsibilities and contemporary obligations of the majority society.

In Germany, this struggle has been particularly valuable to the civil rights struggle of Sinti and Roma, and the organizations formed to promote these rights are the strongest in Europe. At the same time, the way the German public was forced to acknowledge the truth about the atrocities committed under Nazi rule, step by step, shows that simply forgetting the past, or applying selective memory, has always been a key strategy for nationalists and racists. "Putting an end to the past," was a slogan used by the German far right in this debate. It is therefore interesting how the leader of the German Sinti and Roma movement, Romani Rose, discussed the notion of victimization in his interview for RomArchive:

> We can't be selective about the experience from history. We can't just save the good parts of the story for ourselves and simply forget the bad ones. That means running the risk of going through those bad experiences a second time. And once again, I say that it's not about perceiving Sinti and Roma as the eternal victims. We are part of this society, we want to engage in supporting democracy and the rule of law and this commitment should be shared with the majority of society, precisely on the basis of historical experience.[6]

5 Minoritet.se, "Utställningen vi är romer."
6 Selling, "Romani Rose. Interview."

In Rose's view, the discussion taking place today is not about blame but about historical responsibility. And the implication is that Sinti and Roma stand in the front row in the defense of democracy and anti-racist values, precisely because of their historical experience. It is thus the responsibility of the majority society to leave no stone unturned in confrontations with the past.

Antigypsyism does not only affect Roma. It affects all people who fall into the category of the antigypsyists' notions of a "Gypsy." At the same time, it is undeniable that Roma are impacted to a much greater extent than non-Roma and that non-Roma have a better chance to shake off the effects of antigypsyism, for example, through social mobility. In other words, a person who was branded a "Tattare" simply for the reason of "acting like a Tattare," or a non-Roma who falls on hard times and has to make a living as a "beggar" can more easily shake this label off than an actual Traveller, Resande, or other Roma.

Fulfilled assimilation or an individual's career choice offers tenuous protection. In the words of a German Sinti activist at the above-mentioned OSCE/ODIHR conference in Berlin 2016, "We have changed our names, the way we dress, adopted the language, religion and lifestyle of the majority society, but it does not help. To you, we will always be Gypsies."[7] This inescapable truth is also confirmed by the history of the 1948 race riots against Resande in Jönköping. The Resande lived the same lifestyle as other workers in Jönköping and were basically indistinguishable in other ways, but they were still the targets of an explosion of racism in the summer of 1948. In connection with the international conference Antiziganism—What's in a Word? in Uppsala in 2013, I personally witnessed the conference's keynote speaker, American professor Ian Hancock being reduced to a "bloody tinker" by a racist Irish bartender. Hancock did not think the incident was worth reporting and my then academic director refrained from raising formal objections, as he said that the incident was hard to believe.

Antigypsyism has little to do with ethnicity: those who engage in discrimination and hatred do not care about the target's self-identification. The discussion around begging serves as a microcosm for the bigger problem. People turn to begging because they have no choice, not because of their ethnicity. But those who express hatred and talk about "rings" of "Gypsies" reveal a kind of antigypsyism that they apply to everyone who corresponds to the stereotype: begging persons with an "un-Swedish" appearance. It thus follows that antigypsyism cannot be understood by studying Romani culture. Instead, antigypsyism relates to

7 Notes by author at the conference.

the majority society's construction of "us and them," which is more or less based on racist beliefs and social contempt. As history has shown, this can be exploited politically and have consequences from the very slight, to the worst imaginable.

A close relative of hateful and exclusionary antigypsyism is exotification: gypsylorism or philoziganism. The ostensibly positive character traits ascribed to the "Gypsy" as romantic, sensual, musical, or in tune with nature are negative in the sense that they paint the "Gypsy" as the polar opposite, or antithesis of the norm, and these are considered to be unchanging, innate characteristics. Romani people have told me how the atmosphere at a dinner table transforms instantly if they happen to reveal their ethnicity. As a scholar of Romani studies, I have become accustomed to the perplexed reactions I get when I try to explain my field of study to those who are unacquainted. For me as a non-Roma, receiving this kind of reactions is not harmful, but it is very telling, and there are not many other topics where people have so many preconceived notions and are so uninformed.

The 2015 movie about Katarina Taikon had a big impact.[8] It also symbolizes a change in perspective. Roma were now portrayed as shaping their own history. Roma could be victorious. Katarina Taikon could be the Swedish Martin Luther King Jr. in a story about democratization and human rights. But as always, the true picture is a bit more complicated. Katarina Taikon had nothing against working with non-Romani activists. Taikon's struggle was also timely. In the 1950s, Sweden had become one of the world's wealthiest and most equitable countries. The conditions under which Roma lived therefore seemed completely unacceptable, especially since a fair number of Swedish Social Democrats, Liberals, and Communists were vocal critics of the policy of racial segregation in the United States and the apartheid systems in Rhodesia and South Africa. Sweden had the means to change the conditions of Roma, all that was needed was the collective will to make a change. It can therefore be assumed that during this era, the willingness to change had not spread to every corner of the social apparatus. And that is likely why promises made were not completely fulfilled. And it was out of this discontent of rising expectations that Romani activism gained traction. Taikon's voice filled this vacuum with the message that in order for these improvements to become a reality, Roma would need to fight for them. The next step in this process that we are still in today has been driven by transnational discourses on historical justice and EU requirements for the protection of the rights of national minorities.

8 Tamas and Mohtadi, *Taikon*.

Education stands out as the single most important issue: the equal right to education is itself an intermediate goal in the struggle for full emancipation, but it is also a means for achieving emancipation by raising awareness among Roma as well as the structurally oppressive majority society. Education can provide individuals with the means to make an upward class journey, but it can also make people within the group more aware of their rights and equip them with the cultural capital they need to demand further emancipation and succeed in this struggle. The fact that Roma now have a formal right to schooling in Sweden and around Europe is therefore an important achievement, but the problem still remains that Roma are at a marked disadvantage within these education systems. Even in Sweden, there are many examples of Romani children being denied school education, because their parents have no permanent residence permit in Sweden.[9] Also, the fact that Roma are poorly positioned from the start becomes a kind of vicious circle that reinforces itself because children of well-educated parents get a good education and well-educated people can more easily demand the right to better education.

According to the road map drawn up by the Delegation for Romani Issues in 2010, the welfare gap and trust gap in Sweden between the minority and majority should both have been closed by 2020. But there is still a lot more to do to achieve this goal. Many Roma continue to live in social exclusion. Antigypsyism persists, the majority of people still do not seem willing or able to learn about the Romani minority and to take responsibility for their own antigypsyism. The legislation against antigypsy hate crimes and discrimination also seems to have no teeth.

The rise of right-wing populism is a growing obstacle around Europe, a threat that has once again caused many politicians to pull in their horns: the calculation is that they will lose political capital by throwing in for Romani rights. The bureaucratization of inclusion strategies presents another potential roadblock, as it can make a small number of Roma hostage to public projects that have no bearing on the larger Romani community. This criticism is not always justified, but it is worth considering alternatives like bottom-up projects, collaborations between Romani organizations, and popular movements initiated by non-Roma or alliances with other minorities or marginalized groups in society.

One way to ensure continued progress is to focus on what has gone well, which are usually called best practice examples in policy evaluations. Sweden

9 Pettersson, "Den svenska självbilden."

and Norway have often been highlighted internationally as examples. The church and state have both acknowledged historical responsibility in both countries. The conditions for full inclusion are better than they are in many parts of Europe, both through a strong public sector and traditions of general social welfare. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has yielded some positive results. National minorities are given a voice on Swedish public service TV and Radio. Publicly funded cultural institutions are starting to take responsibility for ensuring minority perspectives are well represented. At the same time, young Roma are less and less reluctant to be open about their Romani identity. Mother tongue teaching in Romani is now a right. The number of qualified mother tongue teachers in Romani Chib is increasing as is the number of Romani children receiving mother tongue teaching.[10] Romani bridge builders who have completed higher education programs have taken important steps towards self-organization through autonomous networks. An increasing number of Roma also find the way to general university courses. With support of the government, Södertörn University in 2021 was able to establish a Department of Romani Studies based on the rights and needs of the Romani minority (since 2022 called Department of Critical Romani Studies). But there is still a lot left to do. Though rising, still only a small proportion of Romani-speaking children receive mother tongue teaching, and highly educated Roma are still not numerous. In terms of Romani rights, the Swedish and other Nordic experiences have received international attention. Obviously, this book provides arguments that these experiences are worth considering, but the Nordic countries have to learn equally from other countries, not least in terms of Romani self-organization as a way to avoid becoming hostage in state initiatives. Also, there is reason to consider the warning of Angéla Kóczé that, perhaps especially Sweden, has too heavily become caught up in the "minorization" paradigm, in other words, focussing on linguistic and cultural differences and neglecting the issues of racialization and neo-colonialism which reproduce structural inequality.[11]

Circumstances in different countries are different. Romani groups are different, and Roma within each group are different. One major aim of this book has been to highlight Romani people as agents in their own liberation, but to do this in a non-reductionist way by also discussing the structures and discourses which they challenged or in which they found spaces for liberat-

10 Skolverket, "Nulägesbeskrivning"; SOU 2017:91.

11 Kócze, "Den kritiska pedagogikens politik."

ing actions. What main-stream historiography has done to excess needs still to be done in the historiography of Romani emancipation and liberation: to name people who did extraordinary things to free themselves and others and in the true sense of the word are heroes. At the same time, I wish to pay tribute to the more unspectacular freedom fighters: individuals who were perhaps better equipped than others to navigate through the obstacle course of structural antigypsyism and against all odds succeeded in improving their situation. These individuals are forerunners who can identify and tear down obstacles. We need to listen to them as well.

Afterword by Soraya Post

It's everywhere. That is the first rule of antigypsyism. When you are born a Roma, you quite quickly lose that initial sense of surprise at the way society discriminates against and devalues you. Soon you expect to be mistreated, probably worse than last time. The hope for change may then seem very out of place.

Twelve million Romani live in Europe, and 80 percent of them live in poverty thanks to chronic exclusion from society. Why do you stay and live in your poverty? You stay. Crowded between the walls of a cardboard hut, the pangs of hunger and the illuminated cities that threatened you to never return; but you stay. The bravest and/or the most desperate leave. Fear drives them to make a home for themselves in the forest, under bridges, listening nervously for the sound of enemies nearby. Sometimes they make a fire, sometimes others light it.

About a month ago, three men came to my office in Brussels. Two Frenchmen and a Belgian. They were mass grave investigators, and they were searching in the present for signs of things that happened in the past. Our job is not that hard, they said. Many people want to tell their story. Eager villagers lead them here and there pointing out places where Roma have been executed and buried—thousands and thousands. The perpetrators didn't need official orders to execute Roma when the value of human life deteriorated in the 1930s and 1940s. It was done like piecework. Like a natural consequence of a world in state of emergency. Since no one asked the villagers any questions until now, many were eager to talk.

I'm also eager to talk. A girl died in France. She was no more than a little baby, as she was born in October the year before. The mayor didn't want to bury her, so she was buried in the neighboring village instead. We humans are never as uncivilized as when we are convinced that we are dealing with what we consider to be an uncivilized group of people, such as people like me. Then WE can be absolutely evil. US versus THEM!

When the Roma were stopped on the roads in Sweden (a country that actively sought to expel them) and forced to invent surnames for themselves and their families, they would come up with the strangest names. It is not uncommon for a Romani surname from Sweden to mean something really bizarre, such as Morkoj, which means carrot or why not Emil Emilsson, just to fit in.

We could earn a few coins by reading your palm or gazing into the cards. We danced and sang for a few coins, sold goods, tinned, anything we could do, and we learned, all in order to survive, and not be a burden to society. It was not always quite correct. We survived!

A couple of months ago, an Italian municipal politician offered his restaurant's ovens to incinerate Romani. He said: Don't worry if you see strange looking smoke! No one said a thing. No major headlines!

When the fire service arrived in a French city to rescue Roma from the flames, the mayor complained about their dedicated effort.

It is important to remember that it was the privileged (majority society) who started it all. That is the key to understanding antigypsyism.

After many hundreds of years of oppression, there is urgent need for a European reconciliation process, and it's important that the perpetrators take the initiative. The perpetrators are all the actors in society who, by consensus, have decided that Romani are not like US and shall therefore be chronically excluded. "The Roma do not have the same human traits as US, they can tolerate the cold, they don't want to settle in one place, they don't want to be part of a larger human community, it is not unworthy for them to beg, they are lazy," and so on. I'm so tired of that!

Antigypsyism may sound a bit like something that happens outside Sweden's borders, but it is not necessarily something that only happens in the middle of Romania. In spite of our enthusiasm for placing antigypsyism there, it is everywhere. Rule number one. A wealthy country like Sweden has a large number of Roma who are unemployed and struggle with rotten self-esteem and a self-image as second-class citizens. The level of antigypsyism remains the same no matter a country's gross domestic product, it is only its effects that take different forms. Going to a Romani class, being on an ethnic register or having friends who are not even allowed to go to your home, might really hurt like hell? Who knows? I know! In any case, these are not phenomena that are exclusive to the Romanian experience.

I often think of the American civil rights movement and everything the activists did then. They barely got anywhere until they started civil disobedi-

ence. Then I think about the Roma who go to different countries to beg and what it does to their cause, so much more than all the organizations and events and well-intentioned initiatives put together.

Here in the EU, there is a discussion about whether we should give up on freedom of movement altogether, just because Roma exist. So tired! It instantly feels like a bad deal for everyone involved. I see it as a form of activism when they sit and beg. They expose poverty that one cannot simply turn away from. So tired!

Many who pass by them fall victim to the potential for what I call fifty-cent racism. It is a poetic paraphrase of what happens when a person is faced with the choice (not forced) to give, not give or simply not even pretend to choose whether to give, like a 50-cent coin and then go to dinner to engage in racist small talk about these "beggars." A coin for your thoughts, I think. They apparently were not worth more than that.

A genocide can take a much different form than the next. In an area without electricity, water or communications, life expectancy goes way down. Something like twenty years. If you then multiply by twenty years for every Roma, I think: God, so many people and such short lives, and that it does not have to be this way at all. It should not be this way. It's easy to feel depressed by the implications. So tired! A sophisticated genocide. It is very much real.

If you then decide to build a wall around these people, you are not very far from moving from the hypothetical to reality. Society becomes a kind of concentration camp. It's not a very pleasant thought, but unfortunately, it is the reality for so many people.

We had a hearing about the walls being built around Roma in Hungary and the Czech Republic. There they said that they are physical walls, and walls that do not exist, but they are there anyway. Then we went to a hearing about Romani children in the Czech Republic. They have a 70 percent chance of getting into a school for children with special needs. This means that a child without special needs is never allowed to learn, and that the Czech state thinks these conditions are optimal.

It must be considered a bigger problem when society excludes a minority than when a minority wants to be included. Sitting around waiting for someone, something to change makes time stand still and the world seems absolutely dead. That's what I think, Soraya Post, a young *Tattare*-child in the world, one of too many!

* * *

So, my name is Soraya Post. In my five years as a member of the European Parliament, 2014–2019, I was the rapporteur for the European Parliament resolution "On the Occasion of International Roma Day—Antigypsyism in Europe and EU Recognition of the Memorial Day of the Roma Genocide During World War Two."[12] The resolution was an important milestone for Europe's Roma. In this resolution antigypsyism was recognized as a specific form of racism directed against Roma. I was also the rapporteur for the report "on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting antigypsyism."[13]

My main motivation with the latter report was to show that Roma have been deprived of all fundamental rights because of antigypsyism, which in turn is the result of hundreds of years of dehumanization, persecution, scapegoating, and othering. I also wanted to show that the Romani people have fallen into extreme poverty, which is also a result of antigypsyism.

Antigypsyism is the perception that Romani are inferior people, unable to do what other people can do, and lack the will to improve their situation and cannot be good citizens in the countries where they have lived for hundreds of years. Antigypsyism is also actions that result from these perceptions.

Antigypsyism started with dehumanization and can manifest in many ways: forced sterilization of women, hateful statements from politicians, police brutality, school segregation, and so on. But it can also manifest in a more subtle way, such as unintentional neglect.

Unfortunately, anyone can see that the gap between Roma and non-Roma is all too apparent in all aspects of life. One simply needs to look at the most recent reports from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.[14]

I often hear that Roma do not want to be integrated, that Roma do not want to work and that they only have themselves to blame for their situation. But I can assure you of two things: First of all, no one wants to be poor, excluded, and idle. Second, it is crippling to hear all your life that you are worth less than other citizens just because you are Romani. That you are a second-class citizen in your own country. And believe me, we are reminded of all this every day.

Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Europe and have gone through a lot: they were victims of slavery, they were systematically murdered during the Second World War, and they have been forcibly deported, segregated and dehumanized ever since.

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12 The European Parliament, Resolution 2015/2615(RSP).

13 European Parliament, "Fighting antigypsyism," A8-0294/2017.

14 The agency is an independent body tasked with providing EU institutions and member states with evidence-based insights and expert advice on fundamental rights. www.fra.europa.eu/sv.

Since the expansion of the EU to include Central and South-Eastern European countries, tens of thousands of Roma have decided to leave their countries in search of a better future. But more often than not, these people have ended up on the streets of Brussels, Stockholm and Paris; as a result of widespread antigypsyism and the fact that no one can really be successful after systematic school segregation, exclusion from the labor market, eviction from their homes, hit by discriminatory population registration practices, and not being treated according to the principle of equality before the law.

What Roma have endured in this region for hundreds of years and what they still suffer from is terrible, but not unique. I have come to the conclusion that the fight for Romani rights can only be effective if we collectively fight for the human rights of all people. That is why I have worked on conflict prevention in the European Parliament, on the theme of hate crimes and incitement to ethnic hatred, and to make the EU budget more inclusive and non-discriminatory. I was a co-rapporteur for the resolution on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe, which calls on EU countries to fight organizations that spread incitement to ethnic hatred and violence and to effectively ban neo-fascist groups.[15]

Throughout history, Roma have had similar experiences in almost all EU countries. But this history has not been acknowledged by the majority societies. It is not a history you will find in any textbooks. There are only a few examples of public apologies and compensation for the atrocities. In the EU, there are hardly any memorials to honor Romani victims. And this is *extremely* dangerous, because all these past atrocities—unacknowledged and forgotten—continue to feed into antigypsyism and poison our societies.

I hope to see a happy and healthy European society free from antigypsyism. It would be a win not only for Roma but for all of society. I hope to see Romani children be able to develop their full potential. I want Romani and non-Romani children to live side by side in a secure and healthy relationship.

To achieve this, I would like to see all politicians stop playing the game "see no evil, hear no evil, speak about no evil"; I want them to stop turning a deaf ear to the reality of life for Roma; I want them to be *ashamed*. I want them to take as much responsibility for their Romani citizens as they do for their non-Romani citizens; I want them to live up to EU commitments!

And in order to achieve this, we have to launch truth, recognition and reconciliation processes on antigypsyism, both in the individual EU countries

15 European Parliament, Resolution 2018/2869(RSP).

and at EU-wide level, in order to identify and acknowledge what the Romani people have been through for hundreds of years, to build a common, coherent European story together and reveal what we still suffer from even today—and create justice.

We need this kind of all-encompassing process in order to create a common commitment to a better future characterized by *unity and community*. We need to have these discussions, not just for the sake of Roma, but for the sake of society as a whole. It is only then that we can come together to be a union of people based on, as stated in Article 2 of the EU Treaty, "respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities."[16]

My entire life, I have fought for the values on which the EU is said to be based and which are also enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But even today, I can still see that these values are questioned by many people who do not see Roma as equals and that Roma also have inalienable rights. So my work is not finished. I hope to gain many allies in this ongoing struggle.

Soraya Post

Member of the European Parliament
for the Feminist Initiative Party, 2014–2019

16 "Consolidated Version of the Treaty," *Official Journal of the European Union*. October 26, 2012.

Afterword by Hans Caldaras

My grandparents on my mother's side emigrated from Russia to Sweden in the late nineteenth century due to the widespread poverty in the country at the time, which gave rise to starvation and infectious diseases, but also due to the persecution the Roma suffered.

I was born in Stockholm in the late 1940s, but I was denied my basic civil and human rights from the second I took my first breath, as I was forced to live as a refugee in my Sweden right up to adulthood.

The antipathy and malice directed towards my people was a widespread legitimate and "natural" phenomenon among rulers and so-called ordinary people. Few considered it to be prejudice or racism, even though it had only been a few years since the Nazi purges under Hitler's command, of Jews, Roma and others considered to be less desirable.

I know how it feels to be considered a second-class citizen. Throughout my entire childhood, I was considered an outsider and was uprooted from my home on short notice, forced to move to an unknown destination under duress. People who considered themselves fond of children, animal lovers, and good Christians, would come to our settlements with clubs and hurl racist epithets to let us know that we were not welcome in the area. On a few occasions, people set fire to our tents and caravans to scare us off quickly, and as usual, with the help of the police.

I know what it feels like to be looked at like a monkey in a cage, to have people always looking over their shoulder, to endure suspicion, to be accused of things that I did not do or had no part in. I know how it feels, in my Sweden, to be constantly rejected, for example, walking up to the entrance of a café, restaurant or hotel and being greeted by a sign: "Gypsies and dogs may not enter."

My childhood was thus filled with threats and fear, which I was not really able to put into words. I often asked my mother why some people didn't like us. We hadn't done anything to them. They had never even met us before! As

time went on, I became aware that the law was not meant to protect me and my family, quite the contrary. It was meant to do everything possible to prevent us from living a life with human dignity, with everything that went with it.

I also learned that people could have at least two faces. Prejudice and racism could be found where I least suspected; it could be disguised and difficult to identify or recognize. My mother warned my brother and I about these traps every day. She would occasionally say dejectedly: "I don't understand what we have done that is so bad. We are not welcome anywhere."

One of my most vivid childhood memories is when I was three, in the autumn of 1951, near the railway station in Gothenburg, where we were allowed to set up our camp for a period longer than the three weeks, which is how long we were usually allowed to stay in a municipality, after which we were sent off. These were the rules that applied for all Swedish Roma.

After we had lived in the camp for a while, the municipal bigwigs suddenly decided we needed to vacate the site within a couple of days. As usual, we had all the practical problems of moving on such short notice. This was not something that could be done by snapping your fingers, but the authorities just didn't want to hear about it.

It was late autumn, and the tents were wet from all the rain that had fallen over the last few days. It was not possible to tear down the tents and pack them up. They would get moldy and ruined. My uncle asked the bigwigs for permission to stay at least a few more days, but there was simply no use talking to them. "If you are not gone within 24 hours, the police will make sure you leave," they said and left. Late the next night, the entire camp was filled with intense, blaring sirens. Police vans, which were known as the "Black Marias," surrounded the camp. Policemen stormed out of the vans with batons ready to swing, they quickly spread out among the tents and caravans. Women and children were screaming in agony. The police swung wildly without thinking about who was on the receiving end of their brutality. They were belligerent and shouted racial epithets; it was utter panic. Mom managed to grab my three-year older brother Kennet and me and hid us in one of the caravans. We cried uncontrollably and hid under a bed, where we lay holding each other trembling. We were shaking in fear as we heard terrible shrieks and crying from outside. Suddenly a police officer kicked in the door. From our hiding place, we could see the officer's black polished boots. He took his baton and smashed all the windows and furnishings in the caravan. Then he spotted us and dragged us out into the yard. We screamed and cried from unimaginable fear. Those living in the camp had been forced into the vans, and luckily enough, we were put in the same van as

our mother, which was a consolation in all that despair. We were driven to the detention center where we were locked up while the camp was dismantled and carted away to a forest grove many miles away.

It was an incident that was reported in the Gothenburg daily press and is forever etched in my memory, and which I am reminded of almost every time I see a police officer. Even though I deliberately tried to erase this trauma from my memory, it still haunts me almost 70 years later.

In 1928, Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson gave his famous *Folkhemmet* (the People's home) speech, saying "Sweden should be a home for all the people." Swedish Roma would have to wait until well into the 1960s until they got to partake in this lofty ideal. Until then, there was a structural strategy within the power apparatus that denied Swedish Roma inclusion in society. "There is no need to feel sorry about the Gypsies in Sweden since it is in their nature to wander, live in tents and in caravans." A view that was shared by many politicians, the media and people around the country, who blamed the Roma themselves for their exclusion.

Thanks to Katarina Taikon, who sparked a heated debate with her debut book *Zigenerska* [Gypsy woman] in 1963, which subsequently forced the Swedish Riksdag and agencies to seriously debate affording Swedish Roma their civil rights. One could say her book led to Swedish Roma eventually gaining access to permanent housing, regular schooling, which gave them a chance to establish themselves in society. But it was not easy, because there was widespread and open antipathy towards Roma in the country, not least in the labor and housing markets, which prevented them from getting jobs and settling in segregated housing districts that consisted mainly of residents with a Nordic appearance.

With the move from the camps, most people were no longer able to support themselves in their old traditional occupations. They were exposed and forced to depend on government benefits.

My mother had told me about her cousins Katarina and her siblings since I was a child. My grandfather on my mother's side and Katarina's father were brothers. In the spring of 1965, when I was 17, I met her for the first time. We both felt that we were soulmates right from the start, partly because we had identical experiences in childhood. Over time, a solid and enduring friendship developed between us that lasted until she unfortunately fell into a coma in 1982 and never awoke before her death in 1995.

Right from the beginning of our friendship, Katarina involved me in the fight for the rights of Swedish Roma, in that we pushed a public debate to

highlight the fact that Roma had been victims of structural discrimination and overt racism for generations, which continues in the country today.

Katarina and I travelled far and wide—together and separately—giving lectures at schools, workplaces, libraries, etc. about Romani history and cultural diversity. Not least, we spread the word that throughout history, Roma in Sweden were victims of the Church of Sweden and the Riksdag, which issued regulations and ordinances until the 1960s that forced Swedish Roma into an itinerant lifestyle, which fed into prejudice and antipathy among residents of the country and encouraged discrimination against Roma in the form of harassment and hate crimes.

On a number of occasions, I, together with Katarina and her sister Rosa, petitioned cabinet ministers, agencies and decision-makers in municipalities in the country to pursue issues concerning Romani civil and human rights. A struggle that I am still fighting some five decades later.

But thanks to the efforts of Katarina Taikon, the Swedish Roma, who were forced to live in disgusting ghetto-like conditions until the end of the 1960s, were allowed to settle. This gave them access to things like adult education. Some were allocated small, outdated apartments with only cold running water and dry toilets out in the yard. It was still so much better than living in a tent or in a draughty, damp caravan through the freezing cold winter.

After waiting in a housing queue for about 15 years, at the end of February 1960, my mother got us our first permanent home in Enskede, a southern suburb of Stockholm. A few weeks earlier, the hinges had come loose from the door of our caravan, which had rotted. They could not be screwed back in again. My mother asked Stockholm's appointed "Gypsy consultant" Nils-Erik Wall to come down to the camp to inspect our horrible living conditions, but he did nothing more than recommend that she hang a blanket in the doorway to prevent cold, rain and snow from pouring into the caravan; he could not help her with anything else.

I will never forget one cold winter night when we moved from our 10 square metre caravan in the camp next to Flatenbadet to our first permanent home, an older place. Half the camp came along to share our joy of having a permanent home. Which was unique.

I imagine that our future neighbors wondered how we would all fit in a one-bedroom flat with a kitchen. For me, it was like moving into a castle, even though there were no amenities like a bathroom and central heating, but it had the most important thing, a water closet with a flushable toilet. From now on, I did not have to do my business outside when the snow was falling or in the icy rain.

For my mother, it was like we had found Paradise. In the kitchen, there was an enameled gas stove with an oven and a tap with cold running water. For the first time in our lives, all three of us could breathe easy and feel secure: no one could forcibly chase us away from this place!

I was twelve at the time and was enrolled in Enskede school, but after a couple of terms, I had to move to Hammarby school, because I was bullied every day by classmates and even my teachers, because I am Romani. At Hammarby school, I was free from the condemnation and insults; I was finally seen for who I am, Hans!

There were days that I didn't want to go to school, but my mother grabbed me by the collar and forced me to go. She knew what a handicap it was to not be able to read and write, and she was afraid that would happen to me too. I was also fortunate to have classmates to help with my homework. Because my mother and brother were barely literate and could not help me with my homework. I was also fortunate that my teachers at school were helpful and understanding because I lacked experience in school. They provided support and encouraged me to complete school through ninth grade, which resulted in me being awarded a diploma by the headmaster and receiving awards for being the school's most hard-working student that year.

My female music teacher at the school discovered that I had a gift for singing and used to practice scales with me and give me lessons in harmony after regular school hours a couple of days a week. She advised me to seriously pursue singing as a profession, which steered me down that path after graduating. And that's how it would turn out, because about a year later, I managed to cross paths with the record mogul of the time, Simon Brehm, which resulted in my first record, aiming for the top of the Swedish charts. And ever since that time, I have been lucky enough to be able to support myself as an artist, among other things. But right from the start of my singing career, I realized that I could use music as a tool, both on the stage and in my encounters with people, to overcome the deep-seated ignorance that I knew was the root of the prejudices and antipathy we were forced to endure daily. In my late teens, I also started speaking at schools, workplaces, libraries, church congregations and for PRO (Swedish National Pensioners' Organization) associations, and so on.

Because I had realized that in order to reduce the prejudice directed against us, I needed to inform the public and engage in dialogue with people who held negative attitudes and suspicions towards us and towards people with ethnic identities that differed from what was considered normal in society. In the beginning, I thought it was something I would need to devote

myself to for a short time, and then public knowledge would be so much better, and prejudices would evaporate. It has now been over 50 years since that time, and I still sing the same refrain. For example, knowledge about Roma is still catastrophically deficient in this country. The blame for this can probably be placed on the National Agency for Education, which neglected to make the history of Roma and cultural diversity a required part of the curriculum. Only a few lines can be found in textbooks, such as history and social studies. But it is not only Roma who are impacted by this neglect, it also affects Sami and other minorities in the country. It would seem that the following has not been considered:

To prevent prejudice, intolerance and racism in the country, the level of knowledge must be increased significantly about why people immigrate or seek refuge in Sweden, what kind of history and trauma do they carry in their "rucksacks"? What are their cultural and religious patterns, those that might be rejected by the uninformed as different and foreign, and which feed into the idea of "us and them."

It's odd that so few want to understand that most of the people who come to Sweden have not voluntarily chosen to do so, but are forced to do so because of war, discrimination, oppression, poverty and squalor. They come to a country where many inhabitants wish to travel to their homelands to soak up the sun and enjoy the warmth for a week or two during the cold, dark time of the year. They are forced to flee and need to leave, to suffer through the cold and darkness for more than half of the year, and they do it for one reason alone: to survive. Otherwise, they would likely never come to our northern latitudes.

So, the National Agency for Education needs to realize that it has an important role to play by preventing intolerance and racism in school in order to increase understanding and acceptance of residents with different cultural, religious and sexual identities, which would help reduce conflicts in society.

Hatred, intolerance and the ugly face of racism need to be kept at bay so all residents can look to a future with confidence and feel secure, because everyone here on earth has exactly the same need for acceptance, caring and well-being, and not least to be who you are and want to be!

Today, Roma are one of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in Europe.

In many countries, fundamental human rights are being denied and Roma are exposed to violent forms of abuse. They generally find themselves in a no-man's land, far behind the majority population when it comes to social security, education and health. Roma are usually shut out of large parts of the estab-

lishment in society. In several EU countries today, life expectancy and infant mortality for Roma are at the same level as in countries classified as developing countries.

In recent years, I have gotten involved in the miserable situation of vulnerable EU citizens in Romania, which I have visited twenty times since the start of 2001. I have become aware of how widespread corruption is in the country, even at the highest political level. I have seen the tremendous misery that plagues poor Roma and non-Roma in the country. People who live in the same horrid conditions that the poor population did in Sweden until the beginning of the twentieth century.

For a number of years now, those who have the means have gone to Sweden in hope of finding a job, but the chances are slim because they do not speak Swedish and most have little or no education. The only choice they have is to sit down somewhere and hold out a paper cup in the hope that a passerby will give them some spare change. Some come as a family with the belief that as a group, they will have a better chance of raising enough money for their vital needs in the home country, and not least so that their children, who have access to schooling, at least get one hot meal a day, clean clothes and access to better hygiene, so they are not harassed for smelling bad and being dirty. It is common for these kinds of insults from students and teachers to affect children with poor conditions at home, who are then placed at the back of the class or are allowed to sit in a corner, separated from the rest of the class.

Almost all of the distressed people who come to Sweden are not able to secure a roof over their heads, as the few shelters that do exist do not have enough spaces to accommodate them. So many people are forced to sleep out in the open, even if it is below freezing and snow is falling heavily.

Some manage to build huts from planks, plastic and cloth in a forest grove on the outskirts of populated areas or take shelter in a car park in an abandoned car. The association HEM, a non-profit organization, undertakes a huge relief effort in Stockholm County by seeking out solutions to provide a humane and dignified existence as long as they remain in the country, something the city of Stockholm should be responsible for, but which defends itself by pointing to the lack of resources needed to assist with housing and sanitary facilities for those in need.

Instead, these people are often evicted from their temporary accommodations, which costs the state and municipalities millions. On several occasions, the association HEM and a few other non-profit associations, including associations in Gothenburg and Lund, have succeeded in securing old caravans to

house those in need, but which on a number of occasions have been set on fire by malicious individuals, or have been confiscated by the police along with their belongings, such as clothing and bedding, during a sudden eviction, without an interpreter on site. Huts are levelled by bulldozers and hauled away from the site. The victims are in a state of panic and are totally at the mercy of the police.

In 2014, human rights activist Thomas Hammarberg, Sweden's former ambassador to Romania, Mats Åberg, and I visited Romania to meet with members of parliament, mayors, organizations, Romani activists and associations to learn more about the situation of vulnerable Roma in the country. High-ranking politicians in the country swore there was no discrimination or antigypsyism in the country, while others testified to the complete opposite, that discrimination against Roma and the corruption in the country had increased tremendously since Romania joined the EU. As those in need who live in this country will sadly lament: "We were better off during Ceaușescu's time. We had jobs and food on the table then; today we have nothing, and our children are starving!"

Following our visit to Romania, the three of us took the initiative to establish the Network for Vulnerable EU Citizens (Nätverket för utsatta EU-medborgare), which today includes large sections of civil society. The purpose of the network is to highlight important issues at the political level regarding the situation of distressed EU citizens here in this country and in their home countries, and not least to give them a voice.

The ignorance they are currently exposed to in their home countries and here in this country is identical to what Swedish Roma were exposed to during a large part of the twentieth century. History repeats itself, but now it is desperate EU citizens who are hoping for a helping hand; a helping hand that some political parties are hoping to criminalise and eliminate. Politicians who proclaim in public debate that they will not put a single krona in the paper cup because "it's the best thing for the beggars themselves," or that "the beggars create disorder and make people feel bad."

Exactly the same line of thinking as with the blind man in the Bible, who sat outside the walls of Jericho with an outstretched hand begging for alms. He was considered pushy and annoying and was mocked by passers-by who aggressively shouted at him to keep quiet and go away. That was two thousand years ago, and it is certainly still a familiar story, that those in need create annoyance and discomfort. Nobody wants to hear about their misery!

Politicians and media figures encourage people *not* to give money to people who beg so as *not* to encourage human trafficking and organised crime.

An open endorsement of sweeping prejudiced claims that has given rise to increased antipathy towards the defenceless, in that fewer people are willing to help out with a few krona and other necessities, and which leads to a steady increase in abuse and hate crimes.

The notion that those who beg are exposed to organized crime, such as human trafficking, is only true of a few people who are real victims of these despicable actions, and who should, of course, be prosecuted.

The campaign for a national blanket ban on begging, with arguments such as "begging is undignified," has gained traction and more and more municipalities in the country are gavelling in begging bans, or demanding that those in need, for a fee, apply for permission to ask for spare change at a specified place in the municipality. This makes it impossible for most people since they are illiterate.

I agree that it is not dignified to "beg," but has anyone thought about the consequences a ban will have for the vulnerable if you do not simultaneously offer the distressed alternative ways to support themselves? Is it dignified for a country that is world-renowned for its social justice, the equal value of all human beings and solidarity to criminalize poverty by depriving those in need of their last lifeline?

It is quite remarkable that some Swedish politicians can turn a blind eye to the reality of distressed people in their home countries, which do not uphold the agreements the Swedish government is so proud to report it has signed. The reason is that corrupt politicians and agencies in these countries do not take the actions needed to improve the living conditions of their poor and vulnerable residents, who are forced to live on the bottom rung of society and face discrimination in the spirit of antigypsyism. Today, members of Romanian parliament are increasingly being arrested for corruption and money laundering. Which testifies to the high-handedness that hits the poor population especially hard.

Aid usually comes from volunteer and non-profit associations and organizations, but unfortunately, they are not enough. In Sweden, as I have said, non-profit associations and a few municipalities have lived up to their responsibility to provide vulnerable EU citizens a dignified existence while they are in the country, but most municipalities fall in with the same line of thinking as several political parties, that it is not Sweden's responsibility to provide assistance. A distinction is thus made between people and people, because the thinking is likely not the same when it comes to other nationalities, and minorities who find themselves in a crisis situation outside Sweden's borders and need urgent

assistance. But as several of our Swedish politicians have put it, this kind of general reasoning is also applied in the Roma's home countries, which blame Roma for their own misery and exclusion.

In a debate article in the autumn of 2018, former Prime Minister Göran Persson asserted: "The beggars should stand on their own two feet and demand to get a job." A peculiar statement because people have tried this approach for generations, but with antigypsyism and discrimination as a constant foe, they fail.

That is why I fear that it will take many years before the widespread poverty and antigypsyism, in Romania and Bulgaria, for example, is eliminated. In order to get somewhere, we must, as soon as possible and at the highest levels of government, seriously fight corruption, which is a widespread phenomenon among politicians, agencies, in the healthcare sector and in the population in general.

A 40-year-old man from Romania sits outside my neighborhood shop from time to time. He has three children, all of whom, he is proud to say, go to school. He is illiterate and therefore has no chance whatsoever to get a foot in the door in the labor market in his home country and bring in a salary to support his family. Living costs have skyrocketed since the country joined the EU in 2007 and the salaries are only fractions of what you earn in Sweden, for example. This hits the poor population tremendously hard, but also affects highly educated people. This is the reason why about 4 million Romanians, most of them highly educated, have left the country to move to Western countries.

Every morning, the man calls home on his old Nokia, which was given to him by a kind soul, to make sure the kids go to school. He has not seen his family for several months now and the phone helps make it a little easier to be so far away. We speak the same dialect, Kalderash, so one day he let me record him, his thoughts and sadness, with my cell phone:

> I have only worries in my heart. For me, there is no future. It didn't even exist when I was born. So, I will sit here as long as I need to so that my children do not have to live the same hell as me. Poverty and misery hurt; people's indifference and animosity hurt. I am harassed every day by people who spit and kick me, shout at me to disappear. But what causes the most pain is that they dehumanize me. Women and men of all ages paw at me and offer me money to satisfy their sexual desires. I cannot call out for help because I am ashamed and asking the police for protection is simply not possible, quite the opposite. Some police officers don't seem

> to have anything better to do than stalk me and hunt me down for sport. My only consolation is that the store staff and some of the customers do not have anything against me sitting here from morning to night to ask for help.
> But the threat of being arrested by the police is constantly hanging over me. One night last winter, I was suddenly pulled into their van, where a young, panicked compatriot was sitting crying. Even though I was terrified myself, I tried to comfort her, then one of the policemen roared at me, shaking his fist, to keep quiet, and to show how angry he was he threw my ID card on the floor. After about 20 minutes of driving around, they dumped me somewhere, they kept the woman and went on. It was dark and cold, lost, I stumbled around on foot, able to orientate myself a few hours later and find my tent. When I see police officers now, I feel the fear, that I will end up the target of their abuse again. But that is the price I have to pay for my children to be able to get enough food, afford schoolbooks and school uniforms, so that they can go to school. Everything costs money in my country. I dread my family getting sick and having to seek medical attention. I have no money for that. Why can't people understand that if I had a job, I never would have sat here to be the target of peoples' abuse and evil, which eats away at my body and soul.
> But the ones that really get to me are the hard-nosed politicians, who want to deprive me of my only chance to keep me and my family alive, without even a thought of offering me another way to support myself. Thankfully, there are still good-hearted people that give me a few krona, bring me their children's worn-out clothes and shoes that I can send home. People who see me for the human being who I am.[1]

I recognize myself well in his story. With all the experiences I carry within me, I could easily loathe everything Sweden represents, but I simply can't! During my childhood, there were people who tried to do what they could to alleviate our suffering. People who came down to our camp with fruit, sweets, clothing and toys, who took my brother and me home to take a hot bath, eat a cheese sandwich and drink a cup of hot chocolate on their nice sofa. People would also sometimes pick us up from our cold tent and bring us to their homes to enjoy a warm, cozy Christmas Eve, with a real Christmas feel, for a couple of

1 Personal interview by Hans Caldaras.

hours. This empathy and kindness made me realize early in life that there are not only bad people in the world, but also good people, regardless of nationality, cultural and religious identity. A realization that I am extremely grateful for and want to share!

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Internet Resources

Critical Romani Studies *https://crs.ceu.edu/index.php/crs*
National Advisory for Romani Affairs, Finland. *www.romani.fi*
É Romani Glinda, Sweden *www.romaniglinda.se/*
European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) *www.errc.org*
European Roma Rights Center (ERCC) *www.errc.org*
Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe/Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas *www.stiftung-denkmal.de*
Department of Romani Studies, Södertörn University *https://www.sh.se/institutioner--amnen/institutionen-for-kultur-och-larande/romska-studier*
Gedentstätte Deutscher Wiederstand *www.gdw-berlin.de*
Gothenburg museum *www.goteborgsstadsmuseum.se*
Museu Virtual del Poble Gitano a Catalunya *www.museuvirtualgitano.cat*
Resandekartan [Resande map] *www.reisendekartet.no/sv/*
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